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THOUGHTS ON MEN

AND THINGS

RIVINGTONS

London ... ... *Waterloo Place*
Oxford ... ... *High Street*
Cambridge ... ... *Trinity Street*

THOUGHTS ON MEN AND THINGS

A Series of Essays

By ANGELINA GUSHINGTON

"A jest's prosperity lies in the ear of him that hears it"
Love's Labour's Lost

RIVINGTONS
London, Oxford, and Cambridge
1869
[*New Edition*]

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"*Pictures like these, dear Madam, to design,*
Asks no firm hand, and no unerring line;
Some wand'ring touches, some reflected light,
Some flying stroke alone can hit them right:
For how should equal colours do the knack?
Chameleons who can paint in white and black?"
POPE. *Moral Essays.*

"*Although some things are too serious, solemn, or sacred, to be turned into ridicule, yet the abuses of them are certainly not; since it is allowed that corruptions in Religion, Politics, and Law, may be proper topics for this kind of Satire.*"—SWIFT.

CONTENTS

	Page
INTRODUCTORY	1
CROQUET	13
ON GOING TO TOWN, BECAUSE EVERY ONE GOES, YOU KNOW	34
THE READING PARTY	47
WOMAN'S WORK	62
PHILOSOPHERS AND PRACTICAL PHILOSOPHY	73
RITUALISM	90
CHRISTMAS-TIDE	109
DANCING	127
FIRST, CATCH YOUR HUSBAND	137
ON BISHOPS	156
ON THE FINER FEELINGS OF OUR NATURE	173
ON A NEW MODE OF DOING PENANCE	190

TO THE PUBLIC

PREFACE TO THE THIRD EDITION

MAMMA will have it that I have injured my prospects by writing a book. She says it is universally acknowledged that every one who writes a book is either really clever, or wishes to be thought clever; and that as clever girls, or, what is much the same thing, girls supposed to be clever, are far less marketable than girls who affect to be simple and ignorant, although they may be, and indeed generally are, just the reverse; therefore her proposition is true, namely, that I have injured my prospects by publishing my "*Thoughts on Men and Things*." If this is really so, of course it is a very sad state of things; but I contend it is, or at any

rate ought not to be the case, because, as I have urged in the original Preface to the Book, and also in stronger terms in the Introductory Essay, *I don't pretend to be clever*. I only wish to show that I am not so silly as people generally suppose all the young women of the Gushington family must be.

I confess I am afraid Mamma is not very far wrong after all, for I have myself observed that many young men, eligible too some of them, with whom I used to be on most friendly terms, fight quite shy of me now that I am known to be an authoress. They all seem to think I intend to *put them into a book*, a fate the mere apprehension of which turns the hearts of the bravest men to water. For instance, the other day at a large croquet party young Topsawyer and I were getting on beautifully, notwithstanding that his stock of ideas is decidedly limited, when that odious girl, Honoria Ringdove, tripped up to me (or I should say waddled, for one can't walk decently, much less trip, in boots three sizes too small for one, and heels two inches high), and in her usual mincing style that is enough to drive a sensible woman wild, cried, "It is your turn, dearest; we are all waiting for you: but I suppose you clever people who write books

are above paying attention to the game. What a capital place for the study of character a croquet ground must be! Don't you think so, Mr. Topsawyer?"

"Nonsense, love," I said, "how you do rattle on!" Spiteful creature! I could have pinched her till she was black and blue all over.

You should have seen young Topsawyer. His countenance fell in a moment. "She will put me into a book," he thought, "and what a fool I shall look then." From that moment he deserted me completely; and although there was a dance afterwards, he never once during the whole evening asked me to be his partner, an omission rendered all the more pointed by the circumstance that he danced twice with Helen, and three times with Kate, nearly turning their silly heads, poor dears!

If eligible young men would but understand that they need not be frightened of me, as I do not intend to put them into a book, I should be more hopeful for the future. As it is, Mamma, with Kate and Helen in prospective, is becoming quite anxious about me, although, as I have often told her, she need not distress herself, since I am not in the least hurry to settle; not but

what I think every family of girls ought by rights to go off in rotation, and as I am the eldest my turn would come first, but of course that I could not help.

My principal object, therefore, in writing a Preface to this edition of my book, is to disabuse people of the notion that I am a clever girl. I am not. George often says I am very stupid, and only this morning he called me a ridiculous little goose, though that, I admit, is flying to the other extreme.

But I also wish to impress upon you the fact that I am not, as some persons have erroneously supposed, a Girl of the Period, as she is popularly represented. I am obliged, it is true, to dress as other people do, not to appear singular. I used, in the days of moderate-sized chignons, to be proud of the circumstance that mine was all real. Now my frizzette alone is as big as my head, and as for the hair that covers it, there is no pretence about it, it is false of course; it does not even match my own in colour: indeed, I purposely wear a dark chignon, in order to set off my own light hair in front to greater advantage. I look upon it as a mere ornament, ridiculous, but fashionable. The short walking-dress of the period I consider to be the most sensible part of modern

costume; and if people choose to carry their umbrellas slung by their side instead of in their hands, let them.

After all, it is not the dress that is in fault. There have been far more *outré* fashions in times past. It is the absurdity of mixing manners, chignons, the Grecian bend, morals, and umbrellas together, as if they were mutually dependent. I am thoroughly sick of the twaddle that has been written about the Girl of the Period. It is very evident to me that the writer who originated the caricature can never have studied mankind or womankind either. We do not pretend to be clever, but at any rate we are not such fools as some men would make us out to be.

One more observation, and I shall have done. I do not wish this little literary effort of mine to be regarded, as I fear it has been, as a mere comic book. It is true it was not written for a set purpose, to support any particular theory, or even to supply a want—if it had, it would doubtless have been a failure; and that it has not proved a failure the fact that I am writing the Preface to a Third Edition is ample proof. But although it may be discursive, and at times wanting in point, I do not wish it to be considered as purely light literature,

to be skimmed and thrown on one side. If it is worth reading at all, it is worth reading carefully, a remark, by-the-bye, that applies to this Preface. Before you begin the book, read the Prefaces. Many people never dream of reading the Preface to a book, deeming it waste of time. This is a great mistake. An author would not take the trouble to write a Preface if he did not wish to have it read. Remember this, therefore, and read both the Prefaces, if you would comprehend the real drift of the "*Thoughts on Men and Things*" of

Yours affectionately,

ANGELINA GUSHINGTON.

PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION

IF the Preface did not appear to be a necessary part of every book, I should be very much tempted to omit it, for as far as my experience goes, prefaces are generally stupid to read, and, as I now find out, for the first time, difficult to write.

However a Preface is so far useful that it gives one an opportunity of explaining to the reader certain matters connected with the book which could not well appear in the text itself. In the first place, I have written this collection of Essays with the object of removing the reproach of silliness which has of late attached itself to the name which I feel it an honour to bear. Many of my readers may perhaps have noticed that when any individual gives, for the benefit of the public, an enter-

tainment of a comic nature, consisting, it may be, of sketches of character, he will be pretty certain when he caricatures some silly, unnatural, and foolish girl, to name her Miss Gushington, not seldom Miss Angelina Gushington (see Essay ON GOING TO TOWN, &c.); also, that when a comic writer has something more than usually absurd to say, or an observation more than ordinarily stupid to make, he embodies the same in a letter purporting to come from a Miss Angelina Gushington, and sends it to *Punch*, congratulating himself the while, I have no doubt, upon the brightness of his wit. Now this is not only annoying to me, but unaccountable too.

There are a large family of us certainly, that is to say, we have a number of relatives who bear the name of Gushington, but they are all, for the most part, easy-going matter-of-fact people, not given to absurdities. I admit that a very distant relative, the Honourable Impulsia Gushington, made herself very ridiculous some years ago, by insisting upon travelling alone to the Pyramids, and going up the Nile, or down the Nile (I never know whether to say up or down a river), and accordingly coming, as she might have expected, to

general grief, but her conduct alone would not have sufficed to bring this ridicule upon the family.

What is the cause of it I should like to know? There is nothing comic about my name. On the contrary, when one reflects that one might have been born a Smith, a Dobbs, or a Muggins, one feels quite thankful that one has been blessed with so euphonious a name as Gushington. And as for Angelina, can any thing be sweeter?

Unable, therefore, to discover the reason for the misuse that has been made of my name, I determined, as I have said, to write the following Essays, just to show that although I do not pretend to be clever (see INTRODUCTORY Essay), I am certainly not silly, and have, to some extent, my wits about me; and I do hope that the publication of this little Volume will disabuse people of the notion that the young women of the great Gushington family must necessarily be silly and ridiculous creatures.

The Essays that make up this book have, with the exception of one, already appeared in the *Light Blue*, a Cambridge University Magazine, but, in the reprint, considerable additions have been made to many of them.

The INTRODUCTORY Essay was written originally as a letter to the Editor of the above-named Magazine, which accounts for the epistolary form which it still, to a certain extent, retains.

It has been objected that in some of the Essays, notably in the one entitled CHRISTMAS-TIDE, I have displayed an acquaintance with facts (as the after-dinner conversation of gentlemen, for instance), that could not come under the personal observation of a lady. To this I reply, that in happier times, when mutual hearts beat with responsive throbs, it might be possible for one of the other sex to divulge to—to—, but is it necessary to revive melancholy remembrances in the lacerated breast of the mourner? (see WOMAN'S WORK.) Surely if I say, a little bird, that will suffice.

ANGELINA GUSHINGTON

INTRODUCTORY

MY cousin George has just been telling me that you have published a new University Magazine at Cambridge, and I think it such a nice idea; but it is exactly what I always said, do you know, when mamma would persist in calling dear George and his college friends lazy and good-for-nothing, that I was sure young men at Oxford and Cambridge were always improving their minds and that sort of thing, and I think it shows I was right—don't you, now? And as for calling George lazy, I am sure he is not, and I pity him very much, poor fellow; for, do you know, he worked so hard at his mathematics, and rackets, and sculls, and classics, and fours, and fives, and paleys, and won all sorts of prizes, silver cups and things, that when he was to be examined, the doctors found he was suffering from atrophy of the heart, produced by continually leaning against an Oxford desk, and he was obliged to undergo a dreadful surgical operation, called "scratching" I think, which prevented him from trying for the "poll" or whatever it is called, or I am quite sure he would have got it, for he is so clever, and writes such funny verses, you don't know.

Well, as I was saying, George was telling me—for he is

down here now reading with Mr. Minikin, our dull, stupid curate, who would send me to sleep every Sunday, I really do believe, if I did not contrive to keep my attention fixed during sermon-time by looking about me and remarking what other girls have got on—and precious guys some of them make of themselves, I can tell you. And this reminds me to say how very kind the dons were to poor George, although he never will admit it, the ungrateful thing! for one night when he was reading very hard (this was after that horrid scratching) he thought he would go to the Master's house and ask him the meaning of a Greek word (sounding something like *oinoumai*), never thinking, so engrossed was he in his studies, how fast the time had slipped away, and that the poor old gentleman would be in bed at three o'clock in the morning : so after knocking at the door for a long time, one of the servants came down, who of course could not give him the required information, although he must have been better educated than servants usually are, and more civil too, for he talked about the plain English of it, and insisted that dear George should not sit up to study any more, but should go to bed at once, and quite right too, I think, although George was very reluctant to quit his books. However, the upshot of the matter was, that next morning the Master sent for him (to breakfast, I suppose), and after giving him his opinion upon the subject most clearly and fully, noticed how pale, or, to use his own words, seedy he looked from overwork, and suggested in the kindest manner possible that he should study down in the country, where he could get plenty of fresh air, and not in nasty little pokey rooms as I know George's were, for I was in them last June, although I had

difficulty enough with my crinoline in getting up the narrow staircase. Now was not that considerate of the dear old man? I do so love him. But then, you know, all the young men are so fond of the Heads, as they are called, and look upon them quite as fathers, I am told. Indeed, to hear the affectionate way in which George speaks of the college authorities generally, almost brings tears into my eyes.

But I am wandering from my subject, as I always do, like a giddy thing as I am. George, I say, was telling me about this new magazine, *The Light Blue*, which is a most charming name, I think, and such a becoming colour too; suits my complexion exactly, for you must know I am a blonde, and have just the golden-tinted hair so much the fashion. Isn't that nice? "Nonsense, George." There! he has been saying he supposes as I am so fond of the colour I shall make curl papers of your magazine, as if I were so foolish as to imagine it would be printed on blue paper, or should wear curls either, of all things in the world, when it takes me an hour every morning to make up my chignon (my own hair) so as to prevent the stuffing from showing. And now that I have mentioned the word chignon, I will let you and your young friends into a secret respecting that article, so that you may be able to discover whether a girl wears one of her own hair or somebody else's. A natural chignon is never so smooth as a false one, because, try as much as she will, the neatest and cleverest young-lady's maid can never prevent a few short hairs from sticking out here and there; for although they may not show at first, they will become visible to a certainty before the evening is out, especially after dancing. Now, the false chignons are made of hair all of the same

length, and secured so firmly as always to present a smooth surface, although I have known some girls purposely pull two or three of the hairs out and cut them off short, so that their chignons may seem natural, which I call very wicked, and what I never should do were I obliged to wear false hair, which, thank goodness, I am not. Then, again, false chignons, especially of my coloured hair (which is very expensive to buy), are rarely an exact match with the wearer's own hair, so that to disguise the difference they are frequently covered with a fine net, which is sometimes ornamented with gold spangles; so whenever you see one covered in that way you may be certain it is false, because no girl who had hair enough of her own to make a chignon would ever think of hiding it under a net. Dear me! what a trouble one's hair is to one. I am sure sometimes, before a party, my hair has been on my mind for hours together, and that too when I have been driven almost distracted for fear the dressmaker should not send home my dress in time to be tried on properly.

You should see me before I go to bed at night, with a dozen hair wavers on each side of my head; I am sure no one would recognize me, I look such an object: but then you know a girl who goes into society must not appear singular, and if my hair is not naturally wavy, I must make it so by artificial means.

Here I am "off the line" again, as George says (I told you he was so clever). But the fact is I am so nervous, what with writing to a gentleman (for the first time in my life except when poor dear ——, but that's not to the point) and the thought that these "words, idle words" (I dote upon

Shakespeare), will most likely be read all over the world, that I have scarcely presence of mind left to spell properly, much less write grammatically.

Well, to come to the point, I have been thinking (girls do think sometimes, I assure you) that there are many subjects upon which a fellow like myself, I mean a young lady, could write in a conversational kind of style without being considered learned, which I have no wish to be at all, for nothing injures a girl's prospects so much as a rumour that she is ever so little of a 'blue.' Gentlemen always seem to me to what is termed "fight-shy" of any lady, especially any young lady, who appears to know what is meant by such things as statistics, glut of raw material, drain of gold, budget, commercial prosperity, reciprocity, revenue, &c., &c., so I beg to tell you that I do not know in the least what these things mean, only I recollect their names from hearing papa go on about them when any of his city friends come down from town to visit us; and from the stupid and prosy way in which they talk of them, I think it would be a very good thing if Mr. Gladstone, or whoever is the proper person to do it, would abolish them altogether.

Oh! I forgot politics, another dreadful thing, that no girl who is in the matrimonial market, and has any respect for herself, ought to know any thing about; and I was quite shocked once when Clara Dashwood, who is a great friend of mine, said she was glad the American war was over, because it was so good for the poor blacks, or something of that kind, but I was too horrified to listen; besides, I never can recollect those things: but then she is a dear creature, and such a fright (all the colour that should be in her cheeks

settled in her nose, you know, which never adds to a person's appearance), so that it did not much matter after all.

When any gentleman asks me if I read the paper, or what I think of such a question, I begin to giggle at once (I practise a lady-like giggle before a glass, for I have a beautiful set of nice even teeth), and say, Oh dear no! of course not, and that it would be of no use if I did, for I could not understand it, and that I think newspapers are dreadfully stupid things: so then he is sure to say, that at all events he supposes I read the births, deaths, and marriages, and the fashions, whereat I giggle again, and say, O yes, to be sure, but I do not call that reading the newspaper, and I should not think he did either, which gives him an opportunity, if he is a man of tact and sense, of taking advantage of such suggestive topics and launching out into more interesting themes. Moreover, my experience of gentlemen tells me that they rather prefer a girl who admits (with a pretty simper) that she does not know this, or can't understand that, or that such and such subjects are far too deep for her. They regard her with a kind of complacent satisfaction, as a nice, innocent, guileless young thing whom they could teach and mould at their own sweet will. A girl who has much common sense, and betrays her possession of that undesirable commodity, they appear to detest and to be half afraid of. In fact, I believe many men get the credit of being wise and learned who in reality are not so, and that they are afraid of marrying sensible and clever girls, for fear they should discover the truth.

So I hope you will be very careful not to allow your young men at Cambridge to fancy that because I have a turn for

scribbling, therefore I am one of your sensible strong-minded women who are always professing such philanthropic motives with respect to their own sex; for I am just the reverse, or at all events wish to appear so, and feel far more interest in the welfare of the stronger sex than in that of the weaker. However, you must not run away with the notion that I have not my wits about me, or am not what the world calls well educated On the contrary, I assure you that I am considered sharp for a girl of my age, and have undergone the usual course of training that one receives at a first-class boarding-school; geography, French, Italian, not exactly to speak it, you know, which I regret, as it is a very pretty language and suits my voice, which is naturally "low and sweet" (don't you admire Byron? I do immensely), and I forget what else—Oh, to be sure, dictation, catechism, and arithmetic. Music and singing of course, but I don't consider them part of my education, because I keep them up now. Not that I have entirely forgotten the rest, oh dear no! "Middlesex: capital, London; Durham: capital, Durham; chief commodity, mustard." You see I remember my geography. As for my catechism, of course I renounced that when I was confirmed; but I flatter myself I am still a pretty good hand at arithmetic, as the following little incident will show. The other day George, who is always teasing me, asked me this question: "A goose weighs seven pounds, and half its own weight; what is the weight of the goose?" I answered without a moment's hesitation, "Ten pounds and a half," and I contend I am right, although George will persist in saying that it is fourteen pounds, which is impossible; for as I said, "Where do you get 'half

its own weight from?'" and I assure you he could not tell me, at least not satisfactorily. All he could say was, "Let x equal 'half its own weight,'" but, as I replied, "What is x? where do you get it from? and how do you know it is equal to 'half its own weight?'" And to use a slang expression, he was completely "shut up." Whereas I can explain my answer quite clearly, thus: The goose weighs seven pounds, that the question tells you; but it goes on to say, "and half its own weight," which is evidently half seven pounds, or three pounds and a half, and this added to seven pounds makes ten pounds and a half, which is therefore the weight of the goose. Can any thing be plainer than that? Poor mamma, who has no head for figures, said she thought George must be right, because a goose would be more likely to weigh fourteen pounds than ten pounds and a half; but, as I replied, although I certainly know nothing of the usual weight of geese, no doubt the goose was weighed after it was plucked, which would fully account for the difference, since feathers weigh very heavy, for every school-girl remembers that old catch of the pound of feathers and the pound of lead, which shows plainly enough that after all feathers do weigh as heavy as lead, although a superficial observer would scarcely fancy such was actually the case.

Then again, George would have it that I could not do a long-division sum, and asked me to explain how I should set about it. Now I will just tell you what I said in order to show you that I am not only a fair arithmetician, but also understand, as few girls do, the principles upon which the rules of the science are based. This is my way of

explaining long division. You take a row of figures and put them at the top of the slate (I say slate because I always did my sums on a slate at school, and I have never done any since I left, thank goodness, which is all the more to my credit for recollecting so much, but no doubt the principle would be the same on paper as on a slate)—I repeat, you take a row of figures and put them on the top of the slate, rather towards the left hand. You then make a kind of loop on each side, and in the left-hand loop you place a row of figures smaller than the first row. After you have done this, you make a guess how many times the smaller row will go in a certain number of figures of the larger, put that in the right-hand loop, multiply and subtract; bring down some more figures (generally one at a time, but occasionally two together) from the top row, dotting them under as you go on, and repeat the former process, adding figures in the right-hand loop until you have dotted all the figures of the top row, and covered one side of the slate (sometimes when the sum is very long you have to go over to the other side, but that is very inconvenient, not only because the first part of the sum is liable to be rubbed out, but also because it is very confusing; so however large I wrote the figures at the top, I always made them very small towards the end, so as to squeeze it all in). When you have reached the right-hand bottom corner of the slate, you ought to finish with three little dashes should there be no remainder; if there is, you take it up to the figures you have written in the right-hand loop, place it at the end, rather above the row, in smaller figures than the rest, draw a line underneath, and below that place all the row in the left-hand loop in similar small figures,

and the sum is done; and that is the principle of long division.

There, you see! I am not the least bit conceited about what I know, so you must not think that. In fact, I should not have mentioned the subject at all, only I wished you to understand that I am not wholly unfitted for the task I have set myself to perform, which task I shall now proceed to explain.

I said, you may recollect, that I thought I could write in a light and easy style upon various subjects without being considered a strong-minded character, and I here repeat the assertion. If Cornelius O'Dowd and A. K. H. B. (who always reminds me of a lead pencil) can write essays upon all sorts of subjects with all sorts of queer names, that as often as not seem to have no connexion with the essays to which they are affixed; why cannot I, Angelina Gushington? Those writers may be, and doubtless are, very clever; not that I pretend always to understand them—nor do I suppose they expect me to—but there are many matters of interest not only to ladies, but to gentlemen also, of which men necessarily know but little, such as fashions, dress, &c., &c., on which a lady alone is competent to give an opinion. Moreover, I am sure it would do men an immense deal of good if they could hear what women think of them; but how can they, when they expect us to be always listening to them?

Of course you will say women do write; never so much as at the present time perhaps. I know that very well, but they are not the kind of persons to write in the way I have suggested; they are mostly middle-aged, or married, or old

maids, or something, and so cannot be expected to enter into the feelings of girls in society, or give their opinions on matters as accurately as one of their own number would. There are plenty of clever women to write novels, and logic, and political economy, and what not, just like men; but I think you will admit that there is an opening for a young lady, who does not pretend to be clever, to come forward and deliver her own opinions, and the opinions of other young ladies, who do not pretend to be clever either, upon many subjects of general interest; let us say upon Men and Things.

Therefore, Mr. Editor, with your permission, I propose to write in the *Light Blue* Magazine a series of essays upon some such general subjects; although I almost repent of my rashness when I reflect that my poor effusions will be brought into comparison with the works of all the rising genii (I wonder if that's right, it looks dreadfully like *Arabian Nights*, but one says fungi, you know, and geniuses is really such a very awkward word) of the age; the future Lord Chancellors and Archbishops of the land. Still, there is something delightful in the notion. Angelina Gushington on Tea and Toast; how well it sounds! A. G. on Men and Manners. A. G. on Gores and Gussets. A. G. on Tatting and Tattling. A. G. on Two and Two being Four. Sauce for Bachelors, by A. G. Reflections on Old Maids, by A. G. I could go on for ever, I really could, if I had not already exceeded the limits you assign to contributors (and very rightly too, for I hate long articles).

There! now it is done, and yet after all I am quite in a fright at the thought that this will appear in print because

I know all people who write in the papers and magazines are so particular about their verbs, and pronouns, and stops, and language generally; and although I am considered to write very good letters for a girl of my age (sometimes four sheets, and all crossed too), yet that is different, you know, from writing for the public eye, as one may say; so I hope you will be so kind as just to look over what I have written, and put good grammar and that kind of thing, which I never could thoroughly understand, and never shall.

I must finish now, for I hear George's step, and he will want me to show him this letter if I have not sealed it up, and he is always so persisting, I know I shall not be able to refuse him. Of course I wish to remain incognito, but still, if any young men of good family and prospects should wish to know our address, I do not mind your telling them, but not otherwise. I may mention, too, that there is very good fishing in the neighbourhood.

CROQUET

SO my letter really was inserted! Well, I never! to think that I should have become a literary character, and have actually launched my frail bark on the sea of —, of —, on the sea of — Dear me! what sea was it I intended to mention? Something allegorical of course, you know. The sea of —. Well, never mind, I shall remember by and by, I dare say.

Now there is one thing puzzles me, and that is this: how one ought to write in an essay of this kind, whether in the first person, or the third, or to say, *we*, like leading articles. In a letter, of course, one speaks in the first person singular, which is easy enough; but in an essay I don't know what is the proper thing to do, or how to put it: whether to address the gentle reader, or the public, or dearly beloved—(no, that is for sermons, of course—how stupid of me!)

I'll tell you what I think I will do. I will adopt the first person, just as if I were writing a letter—no, penning an epistle (one must be careful of one's language now one is writing for the press), and talk of myself as 'I,' and of other people as 'you,' meaning any body who chooses to read these modest effusions, which will make matters much simpler, and

prevent all chance of mixing up one's pronouns, as one is so apt to do if not very particular.

But to come to the subject of this essay. You will never guess, now, what I have been doing all the morning. I have been very busy, I can tell you. You mightn't think so, perhaps, but I have. Well, I have been setting out the croquet things, placing the hoops, you know. At least I have been helping George (he is my cousin—I think I mentioned him before, I dare say you all know him at Cambridge; he is at Trinity, and such a fine, tall, handsome young man, you couldn't mistake him), and he is so very particular about doing things according to rule, just like all you mathematical men, that I really thought we never should get the hoops arranged to his satisfaction. I call it very hard work, too. This is how we set about it: we had a measuring tape, and so fixed the two pegs; then I stood at one end and looked through a hoop, and George stood at the other and looked through another hoop, and when we saw one another quite plain (George says he never could see me *plain*, but he is so stupid, you know), then we knew the hoops were in line, and it took us such a time, you can't think; but, as George said, it wasn't wasted (the time, I mean), at least for him, because he is reading very high in mathematics for his "post mortem" (what disgusting terms you do make use of at Cambridge, quite horrible; of course it's something surgical, like that dreadful scratching I spoke of in my letter, because one always hears of the word in connexion with a body, and people sitting upon it; besides, George said himself that the examiners would be sure to sit upon him, so I know it's that; and, poor fellow he is so often out of spirits, and talks in

such a wild way about ploughing and spinning, that really I sometimes fancy he will give up the idea of going into the Church altogether, and take to farming or trade, which would be a great disappointment to us all, as there is a capital family living he would come in for, and the present incumbent is an old man, and very shakey; in fact, he had a fit the other day, and made us all so nervous, thinking he would go off before dear George was ordained). Dear me! what a long parenthesis! Where was I, I wonder? oh, I know. George, I say, said he was not wasting his time, because mathematics being all about straight lines, the setting out of the croquet hoops would, as it were, illustrate the principles of the science in a practical manner, and help to fix them in the mind much more than reading a lot of dry books. I have no doubt he is right, for he turns every thing to "good account at last" (what a delightful dreaminess there is in Shelley's writings!); and the other day, when he was lying on the grass in the shade for two hours, and we thought him asleep, and mamma said how lazy he was, he proved after all, as he himself told us, to be deeply engaged in investigating the diurnal motion of the earth round the sun, or the sun round the earth, I forget which, but I know it was one or the other. Indeed, he never plays croquet now, but he talks of diagonals, and parallelograms of forces, which may be very useful to him, certainly, as of course it is, but it is not what I call the right way to play croquet. And this brings me to the principal part of my subject; for although I object to George's style of play, he only follows the fashion, as I will point out to you presently. The fact is, I have great complaints to make respecting the way in which the game is very generally

played, and as I have observed that University men are, as a rule, first-rate players (as far as mere skill is concerned), I have hopes that the insertion of this article in a University Magazine may be instrumental in effecting some, to my thinking, much needed changes during the coming summer.

A few years ago croquet was nothing more than a pleasant amusement, which brought young people together on the lawn of a country house, and served as a pretext for agreeable relaxation, conversation, &c.; the game was a secondary consideration, to be played with more or less care in the intervals of flirtation. But now all this is changed; croquet is no longer a game, it is a science. Time was when it was considered rather interesting in a girl to assume a *nonchalant* air, and pretend to be ignorant of the commonest rules of the game. "Blue"—(I always chose the blue ball when I could, because of my hair, you know, and as I frequently dressed in blue too, it often provoked complimentary remarks)—"Blue's turn to play. Where's Blue?" That was the old style, and all the gentlemen immediately looked about with the greatest concern in search of Blue, who, upon being discovered talking in an undertone to Red (in the Army), called up a blush in the most engaging manner possible, and said, "What! my turn again; oh! what shall I do! Please some one tell me which is my hoop;" and so on for five or six minutes, when, having managed to do something very stupid, and been complimented upon her skill, she would the next instant be deep in a flirtation with Black (promising young curate), and forget all about the game.

That was always my plan, and it told immensely, I can assure you, to appear helpless, and ask for advice, and all

that sort of thing, besides affording such splendid opportunities for judicious flirtation. But now "Desdemona's occupation's gone" (that is a pretty alteration, isn't it?); no more flirting for me; there is no time for it. What with the forward stroke, and the following stroke, and the splitting stroke, and the side stroke, and the roque'ing, and helping one's friends, and one's friends helping themselves by your ball and taking you miles out of your way, a girl has to be all attention to keep up with the rest.

Formerly, as I have said, it was considered a pretty innocent sort of thing to seem ignorant and helpless, and as of course I only pretended not to know what to do (at least in simple cases), I could still put on an interesting appearance of confusion, and yet be sufficiently cool and collected to turn up my eyes in a beseechingly piteous manner to the most eligible *parti* present, who would forthwith, in his anxiety to be of service, offer some utterly ridiculous and outrageous suggestion; but now I often become really confused, and feel quite awkward, which is dreadful for a girl in society, you know, and what is worse, I receive no pity as I used to do. The gentlemen desert me to flatter some good player who knows very well what she is about, and that puts me out of spirits, and then I lose half my animation, which is generally considered to be my strong point.

Just to give you an instance of what I mean, George used to be the most agreeable fellow imaginable on the croquet-ground; he did not care twopence about the game, could scarcely hit the balls, and when he did, spooned dreadfully (in more senses than one, I can tell you), and was always dangling after me, and placing my ball for me, or keeping

it from slipping from under my foot (and giving my toes such horrid pinches sometimes), and paying many other little attentions. Well, last summer, when he came down here in the Long, he was completely altered. He had become a first-rate player, and said he thought croquet was as good in its way as billiards, and that the rules of the game should be strictly adhered to, if it was to be played as it ought to be, scientifically. Instead of following me about, as I had expected he would have done, he laughed at me, and said I was stupid, which nearly made me cry with vexation; and once, when I implored him in touching accents to tell me what I ought to do, and gazed at him in the most killing manner possible, he said he wondered I did not know by this time, that it was as plain as a pikestaff (that was the vulgar expression he made use of), that I had only to roquet this ball somewhere, croquet that ball somewhere else, then by a following stroke take another ball and my own through a certain hoop, then through another, then hit the peg at a particular angle so that the ball might rebound up to some one else, and ever so much more; that what with annoyance and bewilderment I did something just the reverse, at which he exclaimed out loud that I had spoilt the game, and 'sold' him completely. I was dreadfully angry, as I am sure I had a right to be, but he made it up afterwards by giving me a—little instruction, and he was more good-natured during the rest of his stay, but still very strict.

Then again, about cheating; why, formerly cheating was considered the prerogative of our sex, and a girl was thought rather clever than not who hid her ball by standing over it, or moved it secretly with her feet into a good position; whereas now I should be positively afraid even to attempt

any thing of the kind, for people are so sharp over the game, it would be found out to a certainty ; and if it were, some good player who could foresee fifty moves ahead, would be sure to complain that his game was spoilt, since he had reckoned, after going goodness knows where, to come up to me, "take two off," and then become a rover. And this reminds me to say that I hate your clever players who offer to come back and do ever so much for you if you will only let them make use of your ball to get on with ; they either leave you in the lurch among a lot of enemies, or make some mistake just at the end, and you have to shift for yourself. And yet if you refuse you are pretty certain to hear something about want of public spirit (I don't call it public spirit to like being sent miles away from your hoop), ignorance of the game, can't understand strategy, and other agreeable remarks of a similar kind, so that one often feels obliged to give way against one's own convictions.

Moreover, as if to add to the difficulties which beset a girl who has a soul above the mere game, one rarely meets with two sets of croquet things exactly alike. On some lawns the hoops are round, on others square. Some mallets are short and flat-headed, others long and round-headed ; some are ridiculously light, others as absurdly heavy. As for the balls, there is an endless variety in them. In the original sets, which for my own part I still consider the simplest, and therefore the best, each ball was painted all over of one colour, different from the rest, four being dark, and four light. The varied hues had a very pretty effect on a lawn, and as the pegs were banded with the same in the order in which the balls followed one another, there was no

excuse even for the most stupid person if he made a mistake, as whenever he was in doubt he had only to look at the peg to learn when his turn came. Even I, stupid as I confess myself to be, never experienced any real difficulty on that score. I know the order of the balls by heart now,—blue, pink, black, yellow, brown, orange, green, red,—and if ever I did appear to be at fault, it was only to give some gentleman an opportunity of instructing me, without taxing his brains too severely in the operation.

But now that croquet has become so universal a game, every maker adopts some plan to distinguish his productions from those of other makers, and in most cases effects his object at the expense of the players by increasing the already excessive confusion arising out of the difference in sets. The least objectionable *improvement*, as some people call it, is the addition of a dark ring round the four light balls, and a light one round the dark balls, whereby persons of the most limited intellect can distinguish between their friends and their foes. But even this plan has an awkward appearance, since owing to the fact that white rings would not show on the light balls, nor black rings on the dark balls, each side is placed in the anomalous position of being obliged to play under false colours, the light side having the dark balls, and the dark side the light ones. Another device, a horrible one, is to have all the balls coloured alike in some neutral tint, and to distinguish them by numerals either actually cut in the surface of the wood, or legibly painted thereon. I contend that to adopt this plan is to destroy the romance of the game, and to reduce it to a mere question of arithmetic, the even numbers being pitted against the odd ones.

Besides, it will frequently happen that from the position in which a ball is lying its number cannot be seen, in consequence of which it has to be turned over or moved in some way to the annoyance probably of some strict player. This difficulty has been surmounted, it is true, by certain ingenious individuals, who, instead of painting a single numeral on each ball, paint half-a-dozen or so; but I leave you to imagine the hideous appearance presented by a croquet lawn, with a set of balls of this kind upon it, looking (as it does) as if the multiplication-table had run mad all over it.

This last plan is simply repulsive to every well-regulated mind, but I must now draw your serious attention to another, which is so much the worse from the fact that its defects, equally great, are disguised by a specious semblance of symmetrical arrangement well calculated to allure the thoughtless and the giddy. The plan I allude to is that in which the balls are either left uncoloured or painted some light tint, and are distinguished by rings, four having red, say, and four blue rings, disposed in a sequence: the first ball on the blue side, for instance, would have one ring, the second two, and so on, and the same with the red side, so that if blue one began, red one would follow, then blue two, and red two, &c.

"What a beautiful arrangement!" many thoughtless people would exclaim, "so simple." Is it? I have tried it, and I think it is not. In the first place every one is reduced to a monotonous level as regards colour, all red on one side, all blue on the other. Under the old system the side on which a lady was placed was often determined by an accidental

juxtaposition of colours: a pink bow and a pink ball, a blue band and a blue ball, had a kind of natural affinity for one another. Moreover, the different colours suggested such a variety of romantic associations; for instance, supposing I had chosen the blue ball, I was henceforward known as Blue, and a gentleman with any soul would, upon looking at me, be reminded of the blue sky, and angels, and seraphs, or the azure waves, and sea-nymphs, and sirens; whereas were I, as I should be under the detestable plan described above, called Blue 1., the appellation would suggest nothing to the most imaginative mind but policemen, cooks, and cold legs of mutton, and all must admit that there is not the least romance about them.

Then the arrangement of the players I consider most puzzling, for although I do not enter very deeply into the game, I like to know whether it is safe for me to remain near an enemy, or whether such a person will play before me or not; but it is quite an affair of mental arithmetic to make certain upon these points when one has nothing to guide one but the difference of a ring or two, especially when, as is not unfrequently the case, a ball may be so situated that one or more of these very rings upon which all one's calculations are based may be out of sight. Should one of a side have become dead, the complications increase enormously, and I should advise no girl, under such circumstances, to attempt to make them out, or otherwise she will lose all the advantages for personal display, which the croquet-ground still in some measure affords, as her time and attention will be entirely taken up in solving addition and subtraction sums in her head, not to mention that the continued strain on the intellect

will be pretty certain to show itself in the countenance by a care-worn and perplexed look.

The number of these contrivances for puzzling people which have been invented within the last year or two, together with the scientific manner in which the game is now played, have made it so difficult to girls of my way of thinking, and indeed to some very fair players as well, as to render almost necessary the presence on every croquet-ground of one or more gentlemen to whom the task is delegated of explaining the intricate manœuvres which people are now called upon to perform. These gentlemen, so long as they confine themselves merely to their special duty of interpreting the mysteries of croquet, are very useful, but I regret to say that in too many cases they take an undue advantage of their position, and tyrannize unmercifully over all who are not so well acquainted with the game as they profess to be. These autocrats, for I can call them nothing less, are generally middle-aged clergymen, who are rather proud of the fact that at their time of life they have been able to learn something new, although it be nothing more important than how to play at croquet. They for the most part play fairly, but are better acquainted with the theory of the game than the practice, in which they are surpassed by more juvenile competitors. Still, their theoretical knowledge, combined with the obstinacy natural to middle age, gives them an advantage over really superior players, of which they make full use. To girls of my stamp, autocrats are accustomed to behave most despotically, and one has no chance of defending oneself either, for the appealing glances, touching accents, and graceful gestures, which would subdue any young man, are quite lost upon these

middle-aged individuals, in whose hearts soft emotions no longer find a place. Even their clemency, such as it is, disgusts one almost as much as their cruelty, for when they yield a point they do it in a kind of patronizing way as if they were bestowing their compassion upon some inferior order of beings, in contemptuous pity for whom they condescended to relax the severity of their commands.

I have often felt a sort of electric shock when I have beheld an autocrat coming towards me as soon as it was my turn to play. Of course I am obliged to depend upon some one, and, if I consulted my own feelings, would rather apply for help to any young man who might happen to be near; but it would be of no use for me to attempt to do so, as the autocrat would be certain to thrust himself between us, and being the acknowledged authority, would soon elbow out of the way any younger player. The autocrat advances with a patronizing smile; I feel as if I were about to have a tooth taken out, and his words by no means remove that impression. "Now, Miss Gushington, if you please." I fully expect him to add "open your mouth a little wider, please; wider still; thank you, that will do," but instead the following dialogue, or something like it, generally ensues.

Autocrat. "Now, please, it's your turn. What do you think of doing?"

Myself. "Oh, I'm sure I don't know, I didn't think of doing any thing."

Autocrat (laughing contemptuously). "Dear me, haven't made up your mind, eh? (slowly) well, let me see: (considers for a moment or two) yes, So-and-so plays after So-and-so, and Thingummy plays before them. Place yourself here, please" (taps the spot with his mallet).

Myself. "Oh, I can't, I know I never shall" (here I throw him an appealing glance, for which all the return I get is—)

Autocrat (severely). "Pay attention to me, if you please; you will be kind enough to place your ball exactly on this spot" (taps the place again more energetically).

Myself. "Hadn't I better go to my own hoop? I have been sent away so often, oh do let me go."

Autocrat. "No, impossible, couldn't think of it. Spoil the game entirely. Will you place your ball here, please?" (this is said with remorseless pertinacity.)

Myself. "But why?"

Autocrat. "Oh, never mind why (he doesn't think it worth while to tell such a poor player as I am); place it here, please, (persuasively) it will be very much better, I assure you."

Myself. "But if I am to go so much out of my way, I should like to know the reason."

Autocrat (feels he must allege some reason). "Oh, you see, So-and-so plays, and then So-and-so, and then I come and take two off, and —— in fact, it is decidedly the best plan for you to come here."

Myself (piteously). "Oh, I wish somebody else had to play." (I prepare to hit the ball.)

Autocrat (suddenly). "Stop, I think this will be an easier stroke; yes, here, please" (points in quite a different direction; the fact is, he has made a mistake in his calculations, but will not confess it).

Myself. "Oh, that is much more difficult (as it really is); besides, I'm wired."

Autocrat. "No, oh dear no, you will clear the wire by fully an eighth of an inch."

Myself. "I feel convinced I shall not."

Autocrat (to quiet me). "Yes, yes you will, I am sure you will. Stop, let me give you a line (lies down on the grass and squints at the balls); yes, that will do nicely."

Myself. "I shall do something stupid, I know" (I prepare to strike).

Autocrat. "Stop, if you hit your ball like that, you will send it in quite a wrong direction."

Myself. "Whatever am I to do, then?"

Autocrat. "Rotate the mallet."

Myself. "Do what?"

Autocrat. "Rotate the mallet."

Myself. "Oh, please what's that?"

Autocrat. "Simply cause it to revolve on its own axis."

Myself. "And what's that, please?"

Autocrat (taking hold of the handle of my mallet, and turning it a little on one side, with a smile of pity for my ignorance). "There!"

Myself (for I am getting quite vexed, as all the company are now looking on and listening to my lesson). "Why couldn't you ask me to turn the mallet, instead of using those fine words?" (A murmur of sympathy arises from several young men; I throw them an approving glance.)

Autocrat (not deigning to notice my observation). "Attention, please; now, a steady pendulum swing, thus" (swings his own mallet).

Myself (getting quite desperate). "I shan't attempt any thing of the kind (here I wildly strike my ball, which hits the wire and remains in the worst possible position for next time). There, I knew how it would be."

Autocrat (going off). "Well, if you'd only followed my directions, however — " (shakes his head, and doesn't condescend to conclude the sentence).

Myself (mentally). "Horrid old wretch."

Clergymen, especially High Church clergymen, I am sorry to say, make terrible autocrats. The inventor of croquet, whoever he was, has conferred an inestimable boon upon the clerical world, since he has given clergymen of correct principles an opportunity of enforcing by their practice the doctrine it is their duty to preach, namely, that religion is not the dreadfully serious and gloomy matter some old-fashioned divines would have us suppose, and that one may enter into the gaieties of the world to a very considerable extent, and yet be as good as, nay, perhaps better than, one's more self-denying neighbours. Clergymen have taken full advantage of the opportunity thus presented to them, and croquet has become quite the clerical game, and has completely usurped the position once held by bowls, and very naturally so, since ladies cannot play at the latter, whereas they can at the former, and ladies and clergymen almost always get on well together (of course middle-aged autocrats must be excepted). The game, too, is a mild and innocent one, and does not require any great exercise of physical force in the player, so that it can be enjoyed without fear of compromising the clerical character, or injuring the delicate clerical frame. For all these reasons, therefore, I should be the last to grudge clergymen the harmless amusement afforded by croquet. All I ask of them (that is of middle-aged rectors, for young curates have rarely the nerve to behave despotically

towards a fine-looking girl) is that when they join with their parishioners and others, especially with ladies, on what may be termed secular ground, they should lay aside for a time that autocratic authority which in all affairs relating to their parish no one in his senses would ever question their right to exercise. We expect as a matter of course that a clergyman who has had correct principles instilled into him should rule his parishioners with a paternal and almost despotic sway, and I should consider myself a very wicked girl indeed if I were not to yield to such an one a purely passive obedience; still, I think my demand is one which, if granted, will not be inconsistent with the continued maintenance of the rights and privileges possessed by the clergy of domineering over their lay neighbours on all important questions, but will in reality increase their power, since it will render them more attractive in the eyes of the younger and more beautiful portion of the opposite sex, whose influence, were any controversy to arise, would, if exerted on their behalf, infallibly turn the scale in their favour.

There is, however, another point to which I wish to draw the special attention of my readers, and that is the almost universal decadence (I believe that is the right word) of the old-fashioned croquet. I mean the plan of sending an adversary away by placing your own ball by the side of his, and then putting your foot on yours, hitting it, and croque'ing the other ball to a great distance. You scarcely ever see it done now. The 'croquet' has been superseded by the 'roquet' to my great annoyance, for I assure you that I used in happier times to make the croquet stroke the most telling

part of the evening's performance. Not that I ever croque'd an adversary myself—oh dear no! I never was strong enough for that, but then I used to make the attempt.

I will tell you how I managed it. In the first place I always had great difficulty in keeping my foot upon the ball; it would slip off. Well, of course I was obliged to hold up my dress a little in front, in order to see what I was about, so that I could not help displaying a very pretty foot and ankle, and a small portion of a beautifully moulded leg (there is no vanity in saying this, you know, one did not make oneself), and sometimes when a good many gentlemen have been looking on and assisting, I have kept my foot tottering on the ball (exhibiting in the most delightful manner the symmetry of my ankle) for nearly five minutes, exciting the admiration of the stronger and the envy of the weaker sex. During this time I would make futile attempts to hit my ball, and at last, after plaintively wondering what I ever should do, I would drop the curtain (figuratively, of course,—I mean let down my petticoats), and assign the task of performing the croquet to some favoured youth. (They don't even allow partners to croquet now.)

I recollect very well one day, after I had gone through this performance with my usual success, young Grains the great brewer's son paid me some very pretty compliments, and I really think would have spoken his mind, if that odious old maid Miss Spilikins had not interrupted us by insisting upon putting a handkerchief round my neck. I know she did it on purpose, for the evening was excessively warm as it happened.

Upon the new-fashioned plan of playing, no one croquets,

so that the chief feature of my game is gone, for although I hold up my dress higher than any one else, I do not observe that I am taken more notice of in consequence. Besides, no position equals that of the foot unsteadily balanced upon a ball for showing off a pretty ankle to advantage.

It quite grieves me, it does indeed, to see the gentlemen run after such girls as that little Miss Snowdrop, who has no ankles, at least to speak of, although they might be as big as this [1], for she never shows them; but then she can do the roquet stroke, and all sorts of strokes, and when her turn comes, knows exactly where to send her ball and how to send it; while I, never having paid much attention to the game, or cared to become a good player, find out, now it is too late, that when once one has fallen into a bad style of play, it is very difficult to get out of it, or attain even to a moderate degree of proficiency. Gentlemen, as I have said, do so run after good players, in most cases plain-looking girls with snub noses, and nothing but their skill in a frivolous game to recommend them, that we, who have always depended upon such personal charms as nature has more or less bountifully bestowed upon us to retain around us a circle of admirers, find ourselves deserted, or at all events rarely noticed, except by raw youths fresh from school, or sober and useless married men.

For my own part, if such a state of things continues much longer, I shall certainly go into a monastery, I mean convent; for at present I see nothing in the long vista of years

[1] (Immense space indicated by the fair author, utterly impossible to represent in these pages.—PRINTER.)

to come (I am naturally of a poetical turn of mind, as I dare say you have already discovered) but a life of single blessedness, with all its humdrum accompaniments of gossiping, visiting sick people, talking scandal, dandling other people's babies, and being worried to death by a parcel of nephews and nieces, who, because you are an old maid, seem to think they have a right to tease you in every possible way, and yet expect you to treat them with some show of affection, and give them every thing they ask for. When I am at all melancholy, or out of spirits, I feel certain I shall die an old maid, for I am over twenty now, and have had but one offer (only a poor curate, with no hope of preferment); but dear mamma won't hear of such a thing, and wants to get me off sadly, as I have two younger sisters waiting to come out when any thing definite has been arranged about me; for mamma says she could not think of having a lot of unmarried daughters dangling after her, and bringing discredit upon her for her bad generalship in not having got them off in their proper rotation. Not that I wish to be married—oh dear no! It's only when I am out of spirits that I talk of old maids as I did just now. No, I think they are dear delightful old things, and so useful, you know, after a certain time of life, as chaperones, and to take one out shopping. Still, as it is dear mamma's wish, and as she seems to have set her heart upon finding a husband for me, I should be willing to sacrifice myself for her sake, and I had been looking forward to the garden parties this summer with a certain amount of interest; but if so much attention is to be paid to the game of croquet, and so little to the players (except such as play well, and then it is their skill and not their

personal appearance that attracts people), I don't know that it will be of any use going to them.

I do hope, therefore, that all young men who see this essay will read it carefully, and take into serious consideration my desire that croquet should once more be placed on its old footing, that is, that it should be looked upon, not in the light of a game of skill, but of an out-of-door amusement of no intrinsic value, but useful only as a means of bringing young people together on a pleasant summer's evening—in fact, as a vehicle for more unrestrained, and therefore more judicious, flirtation than can be carried on in the midst of the conventionality and etiquette of the ball-room.

We live in a very nice neighbourhood, beautiful scenery and all that, at least I have been told it is beautiful, but for my own part I don't care very much for what people call nature ; I prefer art.

Now don't you think it would be a nice place for a quiet reading party in the Long ? *I* think it would. A reading party gives such life to a neighbourhood ; for although of course the young men study very hard early in the morning and late at night, yet they always seem to find time to enter into amusements by day ; at all events I recollect, when I was on a visit at my uncle's in Devonshire the summer before last, a party of Oxford men came down to the village to read, and one met them every where at croquet parties, archery meetings, and dances, and yet they must have been reading hard some time or other, for they were all going into the Church, which, as George says, is not so easy a profession as it used to be, now the bishops are so particular about ordaining only talented and learned men.

I hope no one will think me bold or forward in suggesting the idea of a reading party, but I am such a mere creature of impulse, I am sure to say the first thing that comes into my head without thinking of the consequences, and it is that which makes me so nervous at submitting my essays to the public eye for every one to pass remarks upon and pull to pieces. By-the-by, this has brought to my recollection the sea upon which I have launched my frail bark, which I could not remember when I began this essay. When I saw my Letter in the second number of the *Light Blue*, I felt quite a flutter at the thought that I had become a literary character, and had launched my frail bark upon the azure sea of adverse criticism. That was the sea I couldn't remember. It is a pretty idea, isn't it? 'Azure sea of adverse criticism:' I was a long time selecting my words, and at last they came upon me quite suddenly one night in bed, and I could not go to sleep for ever so long thinking of them, they seemed so appropriate and so symbolical. Dear me, how I have been running on: and what nonsense I have been talking, to be sure! I shall send this essay without looking over it, for I know if I did I should be certain to put it in the fire.

I shall be on the look out for the reading party, and shall try and persuade George to give me some lessons in croquet before they come.

ON GOING TO TOWN,

BECAUSE EVERY ONE GOES, YOU KNOW

OF course you know we go to Town in the season every year, although dear papa is always against it: why, I can't think, because he has very little trouble, only just to see the luggage labelled and put in the van, and then take tickets and seats, and carry umbrellas and shawls, and buy newspapers and *London Societies*, and inquire where the train stops, and where it doesn't stop, and when it does stop how long it stops, and whether it is an express all the way, or only part, and if so, what part; so that we may all start comfortably upon our journey, which generally takes place about the end of May or beginning of June. And yet papa always grumbles, and says he doesn't see the necessity for a country rector's family (I forgot to tell you we live at the rectory) to make a point of seeing the sights in London, just to say we have seen them: indeed, once, to dear mamma's horror, he said he thought our best plan would be to read up in the newspapers all about the exhibitions, and operas, and botanicals, and when our friends returned from London to talk as if we had been there too I thought it quite wicked of him,

although he is my papa; but as George has so often said, in his poetical way, he does not see such matters "in the light of modern times."

At all events, he generally objects to our annual visit to London, and sometimes endeavours to persuade us not to go, by promising to take us on the Continent, which of course we should prefer, because we have none of us been there, except when papa was quite a young man, before he was married. Not that I think a foreign trip need deprive us of our visit to Town; yet papa seems to assume, that both cannot come off in the same year. Consequently, when he declared his intention of going to Switzerland in the Autumn, I was in a fright at the thought, that while all the world was indulging in the gaieties of London, we should be condemned to the rustic delights of hayfields, woodland rambles, fern collecting, and all that sort of thing,—which is very well in its way, but possesses no particular attractions for fashionable girls; so I said, "Papa, dear, what are we to do with ourselves this Summer?" "Stay at home," he replied. "Stay at home!" I thought. "What a dreadful idea! What will the Dashwoods, and the Plantagenet-Smythes (a new family lately come into the neighbourhood, reported enormously rich), and the Fiddle-Faddletons of Fiddle-Faddleton (a very old family), and lots of other people, think of us?" Mamma, I am glad to say, backed us up, that is my younger sisters and myself, and so it was at last fixed that we should go to Town on such a day, when papa unfortunately was attacked with rheumatism in his right arm, which he declared was almost useless. However, mamma, who remembers every thing so, said she recollected a medical

man once telling her that nothing was so good for that complaint as travelling, and so we persuaded papa to go, leaving Mr. Minikin the curate to do the duty. We gave papa plenty of wraps to carry, so that he might keep his poor arm warm, and I must say, what with our taking the trouble off his hands, as I told you we did, we managed very well; indeed papa's arm became so much better as soon as we were once fairly off, that I began to fancy he must have been shamming a little.

We took lodgings in St. James's-street—such nice people, every thing so quiet (except of course the cabs and things), and well arranged. I was quite charmed, although papa declared it was a nasty little pokey hole, and that his bedroom was not fit for a dog to sleep in. It certainly was rather high up, but I must say he was not in the best of humours; why, I can't think, because he was only half an hour getting us a cab, and finding our luggage, and then had a nice drive from Paddington, in the open air, on the box between the driver and a carpet-bag, which I should have fancied would have freshened him up after the hot railway carriage.

Of course we spent the first morning in shopping, so that we might have fashionable things—bonnets, &c.—to appear in. What we did get I will tell you by and by. We were obliged to have something, not only because we were afraid lest any of our friends should meet us dressed in last year's clothes, but also because we knew that dear Lady de Wilkins, the moment she heard we were in Town, would be wanting to take us a drive in the Park.

However, papa was so desirous of seeing the Royal Academy in their new rooms at Burlington House, that we

went there as soon as our bonnets were sent home, and before we called on Lady de Wilkins.

Whether it was that I had expected too much from what I had heard of the new buildings or not, I cannot say; but, I must confess, I was a little disappointed in the rooms. With the exception of the third room they are so small. I admit that they are lofty, that the light is excellent, and that the decorations are in good taste; but, I must say, I should have preferred five really spacious rooms to ten comparatively small ones. In every room there are, of course, four corners, making forty corners in all; one for each R.A. by the by, and at every corner one's progress is impeded by a block of people. However, the improvement over the old building in Trafalgar Square is so marked, that it would be ungracious to criticize the new one over severely.

The Exhibition I thought, on the whole, was a good one, and I marked on my catalogue the pictures that chiefly attracted my attention, and then made short notes when I returned home. I will give you a few specimens, just to show you that I do know a good painting when I see one, and, besides, have an eye for what I believe are called the points of a picture. I must not forget to tell you that George, who had just returned from Cambridge and was staying in London, went with us.

These are some of my notes :—

No. 24. *Hetty*.—V. Prinsep. Well, not my idea of a pretty girl; but I suppose one can hardly expect to find style among the lower orders.

No. 45. *The Return of the Dove*.—G. F. Watts, R.A. More like an owl than a dove. Besides, where is the ark?

I should have handled the subject far more poetically. I should have placed the ark in the foreground (if one could have a foreground where there is nothing to be seen but water) with Noah and all his family, including the animals, looking out anxiously for the dove, just visible in the extreme distance. This mode of treatment would have afforded ample scope for the expression, in a vivid and life-like manner, of the various emotions of hope, fear, &c., visible in the countenances of the inmates. Whereas, in the picture before us, there is absolutely nothing but an expanse of dirty green water, whose monotonous surface can scarcely be said to be relieved by waves as straight as the lines in a copy-book, and a nondescript bird. I must confess I like to see a little sentiment in a picture of this stamp.

No. 81. *Rev. A. G. Butler.*—G. Richmond, R.A. Poor man, how he blushes!

No. 82. *Hope and Fear.*—W. P. Frith, R.A. As a mere picture, pretty and taking: as a representation of fact, delusive. In the walk of life to which all parties evidently belong, parents would be secondary considerations, to be consulted *pro formâ* after the young couple had completed their arrangements.

The young man is fairly good-looking, but not manly enough for me; wants whisker. And I do hope, if he does marry the girl, that she will teach him how to dress properly. Old clothes may be more picturesque than new; but painters should observe what I believe are technically termed the "unities," and recollect that a man does not usually go courting in a shabby suit of clothes and a hat much the worse for wear.

As for the girl, I haven't a word to say in her favour. A poor, spiritless, love-in-a-cottage creature, without an atom of style. I pity him; he deserves a better fate.

No. 91. *A Siesta.*—V. Prinsep. I must say I wonder at the imprudence of the girl in going to sleep so close to the water. If she tumbles in she will be drowned to a certainty, and that beautiful feather fan will be completely ruined.

No. 99. *Medea.*—F. Sandys. Now what is there in this picture to make such a fuss about? A plain woman, who, aware that after a certain time of life nature needs the assistance of art, is sitting at her toilet-table mixing some renovating compound, most probably procured from the Madame Rachel of the period. This is all. From the expression of her face, I should be inclined to imagine that she feels annoyed because for some reason or other she has failed to produce the fashionable tint of the day. It is very evident to me that if she pulls that necklace much longer the elastic will break, and the beads be scattered all over the room, whereupon her maid will have no end of trouble to pick them up again.

As to the toad and frog, and other hideous creatures, I can only say there is no accounting for tastes, and that at any rate I should not like to have such things on my dressing-table.

No. 104. *The Gambler's Wife.*—J. E. Millais, R.A. A perfect fright: playing at patience, I suppose.

No. 123. *Scene from Don Quixote.*—W. P. Frith, R.A. I never read the book; but I don't wonder at any girl fainting at the sight of such a horrible old man.

No. 133. *Celia's Arbour.*—G. D. Leslie, A. The painter should have remembered that red is a very trying colour to a fair complexion. Besides, what girl would think it worth her while to tie a garland of roses round her neck in an arbour all by herself, with no one to look at her!

No. 152. *Les Nymphes.*—J. B. C. Corot. Fat and ugly: not very nymph-like. As the young lady does not seem to object to dressing in the open air, I should suggest that before she completes her toilet she should make use of a little soap and water.

No. 153. *Only a Shower.*—G. Mason, A. This picture was no doubt left out in the shower, and half washed away.

No. 294. *Conseil.*—C. Baugniet. A lovely picture; just like an illustration of Paris fashions in the *Illustrated London News.* The dresses beautifully painted. The lace alone on the one must have cost a small fortune.

No. 357. *Vanessa.*—J. E. Millais, R.A. How any woman with the smallest regard for appearances, or the slightest appreciation of what is due to herself, could venture to wear such a frightful mixture of colours astonishes me.

No. 375. *Haytime.*—T. Armstrong. I call this a senseless picture. Three gawky women, in cheap dresses of some flimsy material, very much faded and evidently made up by a country dressmaker, are standing in listless attitudes staring at nothing. As the figures are all equally lanky, equally short in the body, equally long in the skirt, and equally meaningless, I suppose they are intended to be classical. Thank goodness, I don't understand classical works!

There! these are a few specimens of the notes I made on the pictures. Of course I observed what people had on; for instance, I find written on the blank leaf of my catalogue, "Blue velvet sash trimmed with black ruching, sweetly pretty." "Ribbon run through in petticoat body, colour of trimming on dress." But these remarks were never meant for the public eye.

The day after our visit to the Royal Academy we called, in Brook-street, on Lady de Wilkins. Before I proceed any further, I must tell you that George always laughs at the above-mentioned lady, simply because she is the widow of a mayor of a country town, who was knighted on presenting an address to the Queen on the Prince of Wales's safe recovery from the measles. But, as mamma very justly says, although she *is* vulgar, she has plenty of money, for the late Sir Richard de Wilkins was very fortunate in his speculations in tallow. Besides, she lives a long way from us, so that we can boast of her acquaintanceship at home, and talk of our drives in the Park with that dear Lady de W., and take advantage of all the civilities she can offer us in town, without being obliged to tell our friends that she is the widow of a retired tallow-chandler (shortly before his death he launched out into bone-boiling, but I rather think he lost money by the concern).

However, notwithstanding George's sarcastic remarks, we called in Brook-street, found the dear old lady within, and before we left she gave us up her box at the Opera for that very night. Of course we accepted it, for although I had been once or twice, neither of my sisters had. The piece was Don Giovanni, at the Italian Opera, Covent Garden, and most lovely it was, or rather would have been, I should say, if our box had

not been so high (I am sure I don't know how we managed to get poor dear papa up all those steps with that dreadful asthma of his), and so far from the centre that we had to take it by turns who should see the stage. Helen and Katey (my two sisters) would persist in looking at the book with Italian on one side and English on the other, and the former priding herself on her acquaintance with the Italian language must needs inform us all in audible tones of the progress of the piece. Papa fell asleep, and I think mamma was very much inclined to follow his example, but we girls enjoyed it immensely, only that Helen and Katey spent so much time looking at the book, that they saw little of what was passing on the stage. I had never seen this opera before, but I could 'twig' (I think you call it) the whole plot as distinctly as if I had been told it previously. Don Juan is really married to Donna Anna, who is half-sister to Donna Elvira, which accounts for her interest in the long bill of costs which Leporello shows her, and which his master has incurred in getting a separation from his wife, whom he charges with cruelty before the Divorce Court of the period. Don Juan then marries Zerlina, a girl of obscure birth, but worthy of the exalted station to which he raises her, when his late wife's father, who only pretended to be dead by the ingenious device of appearing to be a statue, thrusts Don Juan into the mouth of a furnace, but being covered with a suit of asbestos, escapes unhurt himself. The piece is evidently cut very short, for there is no doubt but that Zerlina, after having mourned her husband's death for a decent time, demeans herself by marrying a former lover, a man of very low extraction indeed. And wasn't Titiens beautiful? Wasn't she lovely? She re-

minds me, in her full notes, of the nightingale, and, in her delicious trill, of the thrush. I must not forget to tell you, however, that George, who heard we were going, to our great amazement entered our box in the coolest manner possible between the acts—which I for one was very glad of, for nobody but he would have thought of bringing in those beautiful Neapolitan ices and those lovely biscuits. Papa, who woke up when George came in, called it nonsense, and a waste of money in a young man who had nothing to live upon but what his parents chose to give him; but my opinion is that it was all the more self-sacrificing—don't you think so, now? Besides, he brought such a capital opera-glass that we could see all over the house; and certainly there were some beautiful head-dresses, which made one envious to a degree impossible to express; though I do not by any means agree with George when he said there were a number of good-looking girls in the house, for a set of plainer people I think I never saw; I am sure they wanted fine clothes to set them off. *I* went *au naturel*, I mean with nothing but a rose in my hair. I like simplicity and artlessness; it makes one appear younger too, which of course nobody objects to.

I did enjoy that night at the Opera, as you may imagine; in fact, I never knew before how much mere music and singing could help one to a knowledge of the plot of a piece.

The very next evening we went to hear Sothern in his popular character of Lord Dundreary at the Haymarket. The fact is, George has some friends who are what they call "Owls," and they always contrive to get tickets for every thing; and George said he had five given him for the orchestra stalls—I really believe he bought them, but he

said he had them given him, which I consider to be quite allowable—so that there would be sufficient for us all, if papa took us; but he, as usual, was glad enough of any excuse not to go; so George was our escort. I am sure I never laughed so much in my life; not in a loud, boisterous manner, as a girl near me did, a girl too whom George had the bad taste to say was exceedingly pretty; vulgarity and prettiness cannot go together, I say. At all events, prettiness should be no excuse for vulgarity.

Poor Dundreary, how delightfully absurd he is; and yet I can quite understand his bewilderment on some subjects: for instance, you remember where he counts his fingers backwards and forwards with a different result in each case. Well, do you know, although I have a pretty fair head for figures, I have tried to count mine in the same way, and I never can get them to come right, even when George held one of my hands to simplify the calculation. Buckstone invariably makes me laugh; and yet they say he has been married *three times*. Shocking man! what a wicked perpetration of youthful innocence. I was glad I was told of it after I had seen him the other evening, or I should have felt quite uncomfortable.

However, we enjoyed ourselves very much; and George, who sat between me and Helen, having seen the piece before, told us what was going to happen, and explained it beautifully, in his usual lucid style, until an old gentleman, a horrid old brute (I don't say those are my words, mind), who sat behind, kept on crying "hush—hush!" so very loud, that we could scarcely hear what dear George was saying.

You remember dear delightful John Parry, with his

Wedding Breakfast, at the Gallery of Illustration, of course. Well, notwithstanding the forgery or plagiarism, or whatever the right word is, of which he was guilty in making use of my name for one of the young ladies he caricatures (Miss Gushington who married Mr. Yeanay, you know), we always made a point of going to see him, and were accordingly dreadfully disappointed when we found he was no longer acting with the German Reeds. George, who can be most absurd, said the entertainment if good before, would now be *unparrylleled;* but, notwithstanding his joke, he could not persuade us to go to it.

I find I have been scribbling on at such a rate that I shall not be able to tell you half we did or saw in London. How we spent a delicious day at the Crystal Palace, and an instructive day at the Kensington Museum, and saw the fish-hatching and the Meyrick collection of armour; and how we went again to the Opera, and heard Nilsson, who certainly sings charmingly, though why George should rave about her good looks, and go to the expense of buying her photograph, I can't imagine.

We drove in the Park too with dear Lady de Wilkins. George thought it awfully slow, so made an excuse to get out and lean with his hands on the railings, to rest himself, he said—but I know better; it was to look at the pretty girls riding in the Row (if there were any, I saw none). Lady de Wilkins was most kind to us, and pointed out all the celebrities, and we had such a capital view of dresses and bonnets, it was quite charming. George declared that a pair of well-bred snails would have taken us along at a faster rate; but as I said to him, "Don't be vulgar, George; how

could we go fast, with carriages behind us and before us, and on each side?" Besides, we had plenty of variety, for we changed several times, first driving above the Row, then below it, and so on; "and after all, George (I continued), it is just as much 'the thing' for us to do, as it is for you to lean on the railings, sucking the handle of your walking-stick."

Now about the bonnets. I intended to write quite a long description of them, but in truth they are beyond all description, the sweetest, tiniest little loves you can possibly imagine. I quite long to return home, to show mine off in church—I do indeed.

THE READING PARTY

HOW delicious the quiet of the country is after the noise, and the dust, and the heat, and the turmoil of London! One enjoys it so much more after a little change—don't you think so? I am sure I could sit for hours under the acacia-tree on the lawn reading and working, and I have done such a lot of tatting, enough to trim a body with; for I think nothing looks so simple and unaffected for a young girl as a body embroidered with tatting, especially when she can say she has done it all herself; and mine certainly is lovely, although I did make it, but then I took the pattern from a lady who sat in front of me at church when we were in London. To tell you the truth, those open seats are the greatest blessing possible, for I assure you I never come from church without obtaining some new idea on the subject of dress, bonnets particularly. People may talk about its being wrong to look about one in church, but what is one to do, I should like to know, when there is a love of a bonnet within a few inches of one's nose, or the back of a gentleman's head beautifully brushed, with the straightest possible parting? and how they do it I can't conceive, but I always will say a gentleman who parts his hair evenly behind must be nice.

Dear me! how I do rattle on, from the quiet of the country to gentlemen's partings. Oh, I do *so* enjoy the country! There's that dear blackbird again. Here he comes hopping on to the lawn. Whatever is he doing? Why, I declare he is pulling out a great worm as big as himself. Oh, you disgusting creature! "Hish, hish!" There, he is off now. I shall never like blackbirds again. George says they eat them in some countries. What dreadful heretics the people must be!

Do listen to that sweet wood-pigeon. Its soothing notes make me quite sentimental—but all hearts are hollow now-a-days, I firmly believe. Good gracious! if there isn't that odious old maid, Miss Thistleton, coming up the drive, and I am not dressed; she will spread it over the village that I have nothing to wear. Whatever shall I do? Goodness! she sees me—I *must* speak to her now.

"Oh, Miss Thistleton, how do you do? How *kind* of you to call so soon!"

"Not at all, my dear—we young people always take an interest in one another. I am quite well, thank you, dearest, (kiss, horrid creature!) but I am sorry to see you are not looking nearly so well as when you left. I am afraid London did not agree with you."

"Oh, you are quite mistaken, darling. I adore London, and should like to live there always" (dreadful story, but I hate the woman. Not looking well, indeed! I am sure *she* needn't talk, for she is as yellow as a guinea, and I have counted twenty fresh wrinkles on her face already). "Then one could go to all the operas, and balls, and concerts, and entertainments" (she thinks such things wicked), "and

drive in the Park every day on week-days, and go to that dear delightful All Saints, Margaret-street, on Sundays" (she is very Low Church), "just as *you* used to do when you were my age, my dear. Oh, nonsense! I know you were very fond of gaiety in your *young* days" (she never was in London in her life, and as for ever having been young! why, she was born a grown-up old maid, I am certain). "But come in and speak to mamma, she will be delighted to see you" (horrified would have been the right word).

There! she's gone at last, after staying an hour and a half. But I will say one thing for her, and that is, she always brings a budget of news. Malicious people would say she was a walking newspaper and a scandalmonger, and all that, but thank goodness, I never have the smallest desire to speak ill of people. And what do you think? Why, there's that young Grains actually engaged to Seraphina Pollington, who hasn't a penny. Sherry is a darling love, and I like her so; but whatever he could have seen in her, I can't possibly imagine. Indeed, some people do say she squints—not that I ever observed it, although, now I think of it, she scarcely ever looks one in the face. Such a quiet and unobtrusive girl too, with not an atom of style about her. I must say I do wonder at men's taste in some things.

But that was not all Miss Thistleton told us. She said she had heard that a reading party from Cambridge were now in the village, having arrived the day before yesterday, and that they intended to stay at least two months; that some had taken lodgings at Widow Boycott's, and that the rest were stopping for the present at the Crown Inn, close by.

I felt so conscious when I heard this, knowing what I had said in my essay on "Croquet," that I blushed up to the very roots of my hair, and I am sure she observed my confusion, for I saw a twinkle in her eye, when I tried to put her off the scent by fanning myself, and saying how insufferably hot the weather had become of late. I have not the slightest doubt but that she will make up some tale or other about me. However, when she was gone we talked the matter over, and dear mamma thought with me that there could be no impropriety in my sisters and myself taking our evening walk along the banks of the river, which runs within a hundred yards of the Crown; for although we scarcely ever walk that way, yet, as I said, I did not see that the mere arrival of a parcel of strangers should prevent us from going in that direction if we chose.

So, after tea (we always dine early in the summer), off we started (I wore my blue grenadine and a piquant hat with a blue feather); and as we passed a bend in the river, we came upon what we afterwards knew to be the reading party, quite suddenly, so suddenly, in fact, that I entirely lost my presence of mind, and stared at them in the rudest manner possible, instead of looking straight forward and appearing to see nothing, as of course I ought to have done.

So far as we could judge, there seemed to be about seven or eight of them. They were all lying on the grass, with the exception of one, who was fishing, and most of them were smoking short pipes. In the general way I object strongly to the smell of tobacco, and have spoken often enough to George about the nasty habit he has of displaying a dirty black pipe (which he prizes immensely, apparently on account

of its dirtiness); but on that evening, whether it was the river, or the atmosphere, or what, I can't say, but I quite liked the scent of the smoke as it was borne towards us on the breeze.

When we returned, all of us began at once to tell papa and mamma that we had seen them (for although we did not know exactly, yet we felt quite convinced they were the reading party), and all about it. So then mamma, who is so prompt in every thing she does, declared that papa must go the next day and call upon the head of the party, for, as she said, she knew there was nothing the young scions of the nobility liked so much as to go into out-of-the-way places where they were not known, and travel *incog.* (as Haroun al Raschid did, you will remember, in the Arabian Nights); and there was no saying, she added, but that some of them might take a fancy to one of the girls (meaning me and my sisters). Of course we all blushed, and said, "Nonsense, mamma, how you do go on!" but I will confess that I think mamma is one of the most thoughtful persons in the world.

Papa (who has no idea of foresight) objected, as usual, and said he should wait till they came to church on Sunday, and call afterwards; but he yielded at last when mamma, who has so much tact, and quite manages poor dear papa, said how awkward it would be if some of them were to make a mistake and come into our seat, from not having been previously informed upon the subject. Whereupon he agreed to go next day.

As we expected (and I am sure we thought of nothing else all the time he was gone), he brought back a most favourable account. He called about eleven o'clock to make sure of finding them in, but he need not have gone so early,

as most of them were still at breakfast, a fact which Mr. Fillip, B.A., who was in charge of the party, explained by saying that the young men preferred to do most of their work in the morning, and although they began punctually at six o'clock, he could never tear them away from their studies until eleven or half-past ten at the earliest.

Papa, while admiring the perseverance of the young men, deprecated such a severe course of reading, as likely to injure the health; more particularly, he added, as he perceived, from the somewhat care-worn and rather sleepy appearance of several (who, he told us, yawned openly, notwithstanding that he was describing in a most graphic manner some of the beautiful natural features of the district), that they worked late at night as well, a fact which Mr. Fillip did not attempt to deny. Indeed, seeing papa glance at a large flagon that stood upon the table, he said that the poor fellows were obliged to take beer even in the morning, or they could never stand the continual strain upon the system.

I will not tire your readers by telling them how we at length became acquainted with the whole party, but I must say how frightened I was when Mr. Fillip and two of the young men first returned papa's call. I didn't know what to talk about in the least, for I was afraid if I did not begin to speak of something learned, they would think me stupid in not selecting a topic suited to the capacities of reading men. At last, after one of those dreadfully uncomfortable pauses which will sometimes occur in conversation when perfect strangers meet for the first time, I ventured to say to the one who sat nearest me, a gentleman with a dull heavy countenance, so of course I knew he must be clever, "How

long will it be before you become Senior Wrangler?" when, to my astonishment (for I thought I had selected such a congenial subject), he looked very surprised, and then laughed, and answered, "Oh, a very long time;" to which I replied, with an appearance of much interest, "Oh, indeed!" (what else could I say?) But not wishing to let the conversation flag again, particularly as mamma was looking "talk" at me as hard as she could, I continued quite gravely, for I wanted to make him think that I was not a perfect ignoramus as to Cambridge studies, "Then I suppose you are going through your post mortem?" (which can't be such a severe operation as I had imagined, for George recovered very quickly after it,) whereat he laughed again, and so did his companion, who put me in such a state of confusion, that I was obliged to blush (but I do not think more than became me), by asking how I had learnt the Cambridge phraseology. So then of course I was compelled to say we had a relative there (but I did not name George, because we expected him to come down the next week). After I had said this, I observed that they seemed disinclined to talk either about Cambridge or their studies, and even Mr. Fillip, with whom papa had been talking of the evils of the modern system of coaching, and the consequent bad scholarship of the present as compared with the past generation of students, seemed a little bored, and as soon as he could, abruptly changed the conversation by addressing us, and saying he supposed we often played croquet, as we had such a beautiful lawn for the purpose. The fact is, I dare say, that young men, when they are away from Cambridge, even if they leave expressly to study in some quiet spot, are desirous, when they are not actually

reading, to cast off all thoughts on the subject, and to obtain relaxation of mind as well as relaxation of body. At all events, none of them ever alluded to the studies they were severally pursuing, except once or twice when papa happened to say that he supposed they were still hard at work, when they would look very serious, and reply, "I believe you!" or talk of impending examinations being "awfully stiff," and of the necessity there was for "putting it on" (whatever that may be).

I must not forget to tell you that although mamma was very much disappointed that no actual scions of the nobility were included in the reading party, yet she was somewhat relieved when she discovered through Mr. Fillip, that one of the young men, a Mr. O'Callaghan, was heir, if he could only prove something or other, to an extinct peerage; so of course we had to pay him every attention, although he was very free and easy in his manners, and not at all prepossessing in appearance, being short, with red hair and freckles, and a squint: and as for music, I am sure he had none in his soul, for often, after I had been playing one of Thalberg's celebrated classical pieces, dashing up and down the piano, thundering out my bass notes, and twittering, shaking, and running away in the treble with such vehemence, force, fire, and execution, as made my heart palpitate to a degree, and when everybody else had said, "Oh, *thank* you, most brilliantly played," "What execution your daughter has, Mrs. Gushington," and so forth, this heir to an extinct peerage must needs ask me what the "chune" (as he used to call it) was. Of course I couldn't tell him. No one thinks of the "chune" in classical music. So I told mamma that I should

give up the chance of becoming extinct Lady Ballyraggan of Ballyraggan Castle, Co. Donegal.

However, by some means or other the reading party did contrive even to make our dull village a little lively. They resuscitated our cricket club, which after a lingering existence finally dissolved itself, when it was found that only three playing members belonged to it. They set to work to make the old ground fit for use, and induced several young farmers in the neighbourhood to take an interest in their proceedings; and when George came down, they persuaded him to become captain of the village club. Indeed, he was soon as enthusiastic as any of them, and was always going over to the Crown, where he often stopped so late that even mamma began to think he really did intend to follow the good example of the reading party, and study hard. In fact, he generally alleged as a reason for "looking up those fellows," to use his own expression, that he wished to have Mr. Fillip's opinion upon such and such a passage.

However, one morning while we were at breakfast, we were startled by Mary bringing in an enormous handbill, printed in large blue and red letters, which stated that on such a day a grand cricket match would be played between Mr. Fillip's eleven and the Mudbury cricket club. George then explained matters, by telling us that the reading party with three Mudbury men constituted Mr. Fillip's eleven, and that the Mudbury club would have the benefit of two professionals who had been engaged expressly to come down for the match, so that it was to be quite a grand affair.

Well, the day came. But I must tell you first, that some time previously it had become pretty generally known that

after the match the reading party intended to give a dance in the large room at the Crown, which is never used but once a year when the Benefit club dines there; but no one was to be actually invited until the morning of the day, so that it might seem to be an unpremeditated affair, arising out of the match. Wasn't that a nice idea? so original too. We heard that the Jacksons, and the Smithsons, and Sir Robert and Lady Harston, and the Miss Harstons (three of them, and they have been to every ball in the neighbourhood for at least ten years), and all the notabilities were to be there: so when we drove to the ground on the day of the match we were not at all surprised, although we pretended to be, when Mr. Fillip presented each of us with a little pink note asking us in the name of the reading party to the dance. Of course we said how delightful it was of them, and how they could have kept it so secret we couldn't think, and how pleased we should be to go, and so on.

We were not a bit flustered, because we had settled how we should go before; I in my green tarletan, and—but I will not anticipate, and I really must say something about the match.

The ground was already quite crowded when we arrived, and the reading party were what is called "in." George was bowling at one end, and one of the professionals at the other.

I don't profess to understand cricket, nor why they should all cry "over," and yet go on again: but a Mr. Stanley—one of the reading party (such a handsome man), I don't think I mentioned him before, but he was always very attentive to me, and once, after I had sung "Should he Upbraid"

(I dare say you know the song, I can do all the shakes and the twirls), he said he thought my voice was very like Patti's, only a little richer—came up to us, and walked with us round the ground, and explained matters so clearly that I quite comprehend many things I never understood before; not that I can recollect every thing, it seems such an intricate game. I must not forget to tell you the riddle he asked us, and which he said he actually made impromptu. "Why should good men never play at cricket?" We couldn't find it out, so he said he supposed we were "stumpt," like the last man who went out, and laughed as if he had said something witty; so of course we laughed, but what at I don't know to this moment. Well, what do you think the answer was? "Because it is a wicked sport," '*wicket*' you know, and 'wicked.' Now wasn't that good? I think a person must be clever to hit upon so original an idea.

Certainly a cricket match *is* a pretty sight, and what picturesque attitudes the men assume! When a ball was hit a long distance, one man would run as hard as he could after it, and the men at the wickets would run too, as if their life depended upon it, and yet others would, immediately the ball was hit, lie down on their faces or on their backs. Now that I can't understand; I should have thought if all of them had run after it they would have been much more likely to catch it. Sometimes after the men at the wicket had been running very hard they would sit on their bats, looking, Helen said, like frogs, but I said more like young Apollos than frogs. Then the dresses too, how picturesque, some in blue jackets, others in red, and some in a mixture of all colours. Mr. Stanley very kindly told me

that every colour represented a different club or college, and some had such funny names, Perambulators, Harlequins, and Etceteras, that I thought at first he must have been chaffing me, but I found out afterwards he was not.

Mr. Fillip's eleven made 195 runs, and when they were out, luncheon was ready in a large tent, and the cricketers would make the ladies join them, and a magnificent spread there was; and Mr. Stanley was so kind in getting things for me, but after all, I had only a little fowl and ham, and some jelly. One always does get fowl, and ham, and jelly at luncheons and suppers, I don't know why. Perhaps it is because when one is asked what one will take, one never knows what else to choose. I enjoyed the champagne most, it certainly was delicious. I drank three glasses, only think of that! But it was all Mr. Stanley, who would insist upon my taking them. He certainly was most attentive, and when lunch was over he conducted me to the wickets, and took me to look at the ground, which he said was always the correct thing to do between the innings. He gave me so much information, told me what the bales were, and when I asked what a white line on the ground was, he said it was the "popping crease," and I answered, "what?" so then he replied, with a little emphasis, "the *popping* crease," and looked at me, so of course I laughed, and said, "Oh what funny names there are in cricket!" Indeed, it was quite interesting the way he explained about twisters, and shooters, and lobbs (I wonder if that is spelt correctly) and all sorts of things. I could have listened much longer, as I am always desirous of gaining information wherever I can, but soon a bell began to ring, and then we were obliged to leave the playing-ground, as the Mudbury club

were going in, and a funny lot some of them looked; there was one middle-aged man, very stout, who keeps a shop in the village, who amused us immensely trying to appear active by beginning to run after every ball, but always letting some one else get it.

I asked George whether he thought his side would get more than 195, but he was in a very bad humour, and wanted to know why I asked him (as if he wasn't the captain of the club, and the proper person to ask), and muttering something about the professionals, went off to the wickets. I could not make out what he had said concerning the professionals, but it soon appeared that they were both tipsy, having taken too much at luncheon. However, they were obliged to go in, although everybody said it was perfectly disgraceful; and what do you think?—why the Mudbury club all went out for 12. George was in a dreadful rage, and spoke to those unfortunate professionals in a most unguarded way; though I do not think he need have said much, for he got what he called a duck egg himself, and nobody scored any thing except the professionals, and the fat man, who made 4.

After this they went on playing again, but we left, as we had to get our things ready, and prepare for the dance. I wore, as I said, my green tarletan, trimmed with beautiful cluny lace, and a wreath of green-and-white flowers on my head. It was generally considered very simple and pretty. I couldn't wear blue, you know, because it is such a bad candle-light colour. In fact, green—*the* green, I mean what is called the poisonous green—is the only colour that shows well at night. I don't believe a bit about its being poisonous. Certainly the dressmaker said it made her cough very much,

and feel quite uncomfortable when she made the dress up, but, as I said, *I* who wore it never felt any inconvenience, which only shows how much more prone uneducated persons are to complain about trifles than gentlefolks.

As the dance was to begin early, we were there about half-past nine, and found the room nearly full then. The moment we entered, who should come up to me but Mr. Stanley again, and insist upon my engaging myself to him for I don't know how many waltzes; and certainly he did waltz beautifully, with so much ease and lightness, none of that tearing round the room at railroad speed, knocking up first against one couple then against another, as some young men, who fancy they dance well, do. I never could wish for a better partner than Mr. Stanley, although George dances very well; but strange to say, and rather to my annoyance, I must confess, he never asked me to dance once the whole evening. That odious little man, Mr. O'Callaghan, must needs engage himself to me for a galop; and I am sure the misery I was in the whole time, what with his treading on my toes and bumping me up against every couple we came near to, it would be impossible to describe. And what do you think? why, he actually had the face to tell me, after the agony was over, that he had never learned any thing but a jig, and that he thought all dances were nothing but a kind of variation upon that!

We did not break up till it was quite light, half-past four I should think, and I danced at least eight times with Mr. Stanley. Mamma was very angry with me the next day, for, as she said, we know nothing whatever of him, and for all we know he may be as poor as a church mouse. I don't

care a bit. But George was dreadful; so unkind, and why I can't think; he would scarcely speak to any one all day, and as for looking at me—but as if that was any consequence, or mattered to me at all.

What a thing it is to have a Heart, and that Heart a susceptible one! I must fly to my Tupper for consolation (I always read poetry when I feel low spirited). What says the gentle bard?

"Jealousy is the Heartburn of the Soul (how true!), and yields to the mild Alkali of Affection."

WOMAN'S WORK

ALAS! what sad remembrances throng my breast as I put pen to paper! You may recollect, perhaps, the circumstances which caused me to have recourse to what has been so sweetly termed, the "soothing sympathy" of Tupper. Poor Mr. Stanley! They are all gone. The reading party, I mean. And George too, he is away, I don't even know where he is. It is very ungrateful of him not to tell me. "Mistaken in my disposition," he said. I am sure I have been mistaken in his. However, I won't give way, I declare I won't. We are not such dependent creatures as men think us. I intend to show a little spirit and to stand up for my sex. Not in a strong-minded way, of course, but still with firmness. I am afraid you have been led to infer from the general tone of my writings that I am one of your light, frivolous girls, who have no idea of any thing but pleasure, and show an utter distaste for serious work. Now this is not the case; and I am determined that the subject of this essay, and the manner in which I shall treat it, shall disabuse you of any false inferences you may have drawn from remarks penned in lighter, I will not say happier hours; but I certainly do think, now that all our young friends have left, and that George has taken his

departure in this unaccountable manner, our naturally dull village never looked duller. It is enough to make one go melancholy mad, or, at all events, commit suicide, if it wasn't for the idea of an inquest on one's body.

But this is a relapse into weakness, culpable weakness. What is George or any one to me now? I am resolved, positively determined, to be an old maid, in fact I have a very good mind to cut off my ring finger, and then one couldn't be married, you know. But I must not let my thoughts run on in this way. Work—woman's work is my theme, and I must treat it as its importance deserves.

I dare say you fancy, now, that by woman's work I mean tatting, and crocheting, and so forth, whereas I mean nothing of the kind. Of course those things are work, but not real hard work; when I talk of woman's work, I mean what women can do for people's advantage or good, so that I include some kind of needlework, such as making flannel-petticoats, and night-caps, and things for poor persons; and as I hate plain sewing above every thing, I force myself to do it on purpose, because I don't intend in my unhappy condition to consult my own pleasure, but rather to go against my inclination in every way. Up to the present time I have devoted myself to shirts, and when I first began I thought I never should master the art of making them. However after a little practice I became a pretty fair hand at that kind of work. Indeed it is much simpler than you would fancy. You take a breadth of calico almost twice the length of the article; you then double it nearly in the middle, but not quite, and sew up the sides to within about six inches of each end, leaving two holes for the arms at the doubled end.

When this is done it looks something like a bag, in the bottom of which you must now cut a slit for the neck, and another longer slit at right angles to the last, to make the front. And having done this, you have formed what may be termed the nucleus of your shirt, and have only to put in the binders round the arm-holes, insert the sleeves, gores, and gussets, gather the neck and wrists, sew on the bands and collar, stitch and hem, finish up with buttons and button-holes, and there you are. Of course I have had a few failures in the way of excessively long sleeves, and preposterously high collars; and by these peculiarities my first essays in shirt-making may be recognized any Sunday in Mudbury Church, for the recipients of my bounty seem to take a pride in rendering these defects as conspicuous as possible, as if they thought amateur needlework was thereby honourably distinguished from the productions of professed sempstresses. One old man in particular wears his shirt-collar stuck up so straight and stiff all round his neck, especially at the back, that it is with the greatest difficulty he can keep his hat on his head at all, indeed he can only manage to do so by tilting it very much over his forehead.

Then, besides plain sewing, another branch of woman's work consists of course in visiting poor persons, and giving them good advice about family management, and so forth. Not that I wish you to suppose I am just now about to begin such work. I have always made a point of seeing people in the village who don't live far off, and taking them little presents. In fact, we have a regular set, chiefly clean old women and children, whom I and my sisters take great interest in; and to see the grateful way in which the

recipients take their weekly allowance of castor-oil and Gregory powder, is perfectly enchanting. I can assure you I am never deaf to the voice of distress, and this very summer I left a game of croquet, actually on the eve of victory, to carry a bottle of tincture of rhubarb to a poor man who had broken his neck in falling from a hay-rick. Mind, I do not take any merit to myself, because in the ordinary way I should have hesitated before I disturbed a set, but under the circumstances I felt justified in acting in the prompt manner I did.

Papa, who I will say is dreadfully old-fashioned in some things, only allows us to prescribe the simple remedies I have mentioned, otherwise I should be willing, with the aid of "Graham's *Domestic Medicine*," to extend my sphere of operations, for I have quite a mission (as our low-church friends would call it) that way, and look forward with delight to the time when I shall have become a Sister of Mercy, for, as I said, I have given up all thoughts of anything matrimonial, which is really a great relief, especially when one is so fully determined as I am; besides, I consider the habit and cap becoming rather than not. I sadly want papa to establish a Home, only, as he says, we have no one to put in it. Still I think if the thing were once set on foot we might get somebody, and then I should be matron, and live such a nice quiet life, just what I should thoroughly enjoy, and Homes seem all the fashion now. Poor George, I wonder what he would say. But I may spare my pity, for it wouldn't surprise me in the least to hear that he had gone into a Monastery out of mere spite.

How one's thoughts do wander, and carry one quite away

from one's subject! It was a long time, as you may imagine, before I could accustom myself to enter the nasty, dirty cottages in which labourers and indeed all poor persons seem to delight; and then they or their children were always getting ill at such awkward times, generally in wet weather or in the winter, without considering that the mud would get over one's goloshes every time one went out of doors. I think I must have lost at least three pairs one very bad winter. I wish somebody would invent a better kind of overshoe, for those made of indian-rubber cause one to slip about if it is in the least degree muddy. In fact, I very nearly sprained my ancle once, but providentially George was with me, and caught hold of me just in time, for it is no joke for a girl to sprain her ancle in the winter, when so many dances are going on. But I forgot. Of course when I am matron of a Home, or a Sister of Mercy, I must not think of dancing, so after all it wouldn't matter spraining one's ancle, which would be an advantage I quite overlooked, so I need not adopt pattens, as I once seriously thought of doing, and really should have done, only mamma said they would spoil my figure, and make me look just like a market-woman. But after all, what does one's figure matter when one is dressed in a long black serge robe, and I am determined to have one made as soon as possible, for there is nothing like beginning work in earnest, one must feel so sober and serious-minded, dressed in what I should formerly have called such an outlandish fashion.

I wonder if they have croquet-grounds in nunneries, because, you know, lots of young women are put into convents, just as one would send a girl to a school where there were no

vacations if she were at all troublesome, or to get her out of the way of fortune-hunters, supposing she had money. There would then appear to be no impropriety in persons so placed playing croquet, since they do not for the most part intend to take the veil. And yet one would imagine the game, under such circumstances, would be somewhat flat, like sisterly salutes, which Shakespeare terms, in that beautiful and well-known passage in the Midsummer Night's Dream, "insipid things like sandwiches of veal," and so they are, I think, compared with—but it will never do for a desolated soul to recall soft impeachments, especially when one hopes with all the fervour of youth's smouldering aspirations (that's a well-turned sentence, isn't it?) to end one's days as the matron of an Orphanage, a Home for incurables or little boys, or perhaps a workhouse; for although I am quite determined that my future life shall be one of asceticism, yet I may be allowed a little time to consider under what conditions it shall be spent.

Sometimes I fancy I should like to take charge of children, for in my worldly days I have kissed and dandled such a number of babies (in public one always does that sort of thing—it pleases the mothers, and if gentlemen should be looking on leads them to think what a nice, affectionate, and domestic wife one would make), that I have become quite skilful. In fact, I used to practise upon the cottagers' babies, so that I might not appear awkward in handling the little darlings whenever I had to do so in company, at a christening, for instance. Unfortunately, I let one drop on a stone floor (it was only a poor person's child, but I am sure she could not have made more fuss about it if she had been a

fine lady—indeed, as fashions go, I believe she made more), and the disagreeable little thing must needs grow up with an enormous forehead, water on the brain the doctors said, but the mother would have it that the fall was the cause of it; so after that papa insisted I should leave the babies alone. Still I have learnt a good deal. For instance, when a child persists in crying, or, in the language of the nursery, becomes fractious, all one has to do is to turn it upside down, and thump it on the back—you can have no idea how quiet all children will become under this treatment. At first they cry louder than ever, but after a time they give a kind of a gasp, and when most of their breath has been judiciously thumped out, they cease altogether.

I am convinced that I should get on admirably among poor people, for I can listen without weariness to a long catalogue of "misfortins" or bodily ailings, which is a quality all lady visitors to country folks should possess; for be the malady ever so trifling, the sufferer, if one of the lower orders, always seems to take the greatest delight in detailing the minutest symptoms, and appears disappointed if you do not feel, or at all events feign, an interest in the recital equal to his or hers. I succeed best with women and children: the men puzzle me, for I don't know what to say to them, nor they to me, and they look so uncomfortable and so unable to take care of their limbs, or to decide what to do with them, or where to place them while one is in the house, that I am always glad to find only the women at home; for although I am sometimes at a loss what to say even to them, yet by inquiring after their health, which I have ascertained by experience to be generally "middlin," I can, as a rule, broach

a subject upon which they can be very communicative without requiring one to do more than assent with a voice of sympathy to the mournful tale. But, as I said before, babies form my *pièce de résistance*. I begin by guessing them to be twice as old as they appear to be, which flatters the mothers, for when I am told the real age I have only to reply, "Dear me, what a remarkably fine child!" to put myself on good terms with the whole family, and on subsequent visits I need but observe how the child grows, and that it really begins to take notice, the darling, to preserve the favourable impression created by my first remarks.

As a rule, therefore, by praising a baby, one ingratiates oneself with its parents, but as there are exceptions to all rules, so there are to this one, as I shall proceed to point out. When I began to make acquaintance with poor people I used to be startled now and then by coming across certain individuals who could not only bear the loss of friends and relatives with the most philosophical resignation, but even regard it with a kind of complacent satisfaction that, until I became accustomed to it, used actually to shock me. But when I pondered over the matter, I felt how wrong I was to blame people so happily constituted as to be able, although totally ignorant of the manners and customs of polite society, to

"Attain the wise indifference of the wise."

I will give an instance in point to explain my meaning. A poor woman whom I was in the habit of visiting, lost her husband rather suddenly, and was left with a young family, and among them a baby a few weeks old. I thought it my

duty to go and see her, and offer the usual condolences suited to the occasion. So I went well primed with common-places on the uncertainty of human life, and the duty of bearing up under affliction; I told her that it was what we must all come to, that every thing was for the best, and so forth, when, much to my surprise, instead of crying in the corner of her apron, as I had expected she would have done, she brightened up, and replied quite cheerfully, "Oh yes, Miss, I know as it's all right, and I'm much happier, Miss, now Bill's gone, for he was allus a messing with the children like, and I do think the baby won't be long a follerin of him, for it's most uncommon weakly; just look at his little arms, Miss, not a mossle of flesh on 'em, is there?" I was wonderfully taken with the woman! No mere conventional display of grief, but such a spirit of self-reliance! I saw her frequently on subsequent occasions, and she never failed to express a pious wish that it "might please the Lord to take the baby," whose emaciated condition she would with a smile of gratification bid me notice, and certainly the poor little thing was nothing but a bag of bones, for I have every reason to believe that the mother, in order to put no hindrance in the way of Providence, was rather chary in supplying it with nourishment. However, notwithstanding her amiable contrivance for sending it to a "better place," (to use her own words,) the baby, out of mere spite, I have no doubt, managed to survive, and is now a strapping child.

I must not forget to say that I have a great notion of effecting what I call a reformation in cottage economy. So few poor persons have any idea of real comfort, of neatness and cleanliness. I don't think I ever went into a house where

the inmate did not apologize for the things being "all about," or "in a muddle." But as I have frequently said, "Why are your things 'all about?' why don't you put them in their places? It is all nonsense to say you have no places to put them in; you should make places." And yet, would you believe it? these very persons, after I had left, would grumble, and wish me to be in their position that they might see how I would act then! Very differently, I can tell them. Instead of allowing every thing to go to rack and ruin, and complaining of the landlord, I should exert myself, lay out a little money, buy comfortable sheets and blankets, always wear good strong boots and shoes in wet weather, repair my broken chairs and rickety tables, contrive to fix up two or three convenient cupboards here and there, and keep every thing neat, clean, and tidy. And yet I can assure you that I have been actually laughed at for these very suggestions, and asked where the money to buy the blankets and shoes, and repair the furniture, is to come from. Why, by saving their wages, to be sure. Even a penny a day comes to more than five and twenty shillings a year, without counting Sundays; and what is a penny? why one pays that for every letter one posts, without so much as thinking about the cost. Yes, when I divulge my entire plan of cottage economy, it will rather surprise some of your so-called philanthropists, I fancy.

For one branch of woman's work—visiting poor people—I am evidently fitted, since, as you will have already learned from my remarks, I have not only some practical knowledge of the subject, but have actually devised a plan for the social improvement of the lower orders.

For the sorrow-stricken soul, this kind of work is eminently suited. In future years, perhaps, when a light scar shall be all that is left to mark the spot where the wide wound of agonizing anguish now gapes open-mouthed on the lonely sufferer's heart, I may be able to check the emotions that for the hour swell my breast; I may sympathize with the young, and regard with complacency, while I endeavour to regulate by my advice, those flirtations in which I once indulged, but which I now renounce. I may then perhaps assume the normal position of an old maid; take an affectionate interest in "engaged ones;" chaperone the beautiful to balls; extol the amiable dispositions of the plain and the poor; and use my best endeavours to prevent the rich from throwing themselves away upon the penniless. At present, recent occurrences which I need not particularize, cause me to waver between suicide, a convent, or a workhouse (as matron). Could any of my readers tell me which is considered in society the most fashionable way of committing the first; how I could obtain admittance into the second; and whether I should be able to find a third without a casual ward?

I have just heard that George is staying at General Drumble's. You can't think what horrid flirts those girls (the Miss Drumbles, I mean) are, they are always on the look out, and Mrs. Drumble is such a managing woman. I don't wonder he never told us where he was; I have no patience with him.

PHILOSOPHERS AND PRACTICAL PHILOSOPHY

DO you know I am perfectly ashamed to confess it, but up to a comparatively recent period I had quite mistaken notions concerning philosophers. I used always to fancy that they were people who lived in the Middle Ages, and employed most of their time in picking up stones, a race of geologists in advance of their generation, as it were. However, some time ago I heard papa talking about a Mr. Mill, whom he styled, much to my surprise, for I thought all that sort of people were extinct, a philosopher. So as I am naturally of an inquiring mind, I said, "Papa, dear, what is a philosopher?" and he replied rather unsatisfactorily, for I must say poor papa is not very quick in apprehending the drift of a question. "Philosophers, my dear, what do you want to know about philosophers, eh?" "Oh!" I answered, "I want to know who they are, that's all." So then he hummed and hawed, and said, "Philosophers, well you see, my dear, philosophers are—exactly, you know, and I am sure I don't see why you should trouble your head about such matters, far too deep for you, my dear;" and then he began to rustle the newspaper, which I knew was a sign that he did not wish to be questioned any more. However, I was

determined I would have some answer, so I persisted, "But, papa, you have not told me who philosophers are now." Then when he saw it was of no use trying to put me off, he accepted the situation, threw one leg over the other, laid the paper down, placed the tips of his fingers together, and said, in a kind of judicial way, which he always adopts when he intends to dispose of a question finally, "My dear girl, I am exceedingly glad to find that you are possessed with a laudable desire to improve yourself, and to acquire knowledge, and as it will always be a pleasure to me to afford you any assistance in following the promptings of so worthy an ambition, I will readily furnish you with the information you require. The word Philosopher, my dear Angelina, is derived from that ancient language the Greek, and signifies in our tongue a lover of wisdom. And now I hope you are satisfied." Of course I was obliged to be, but I was not a bit. A lover of wisdom indeed, I thought all people should wish to be that. So then I went to George (this was before our unhappy estrangement), and said, "George, I want to ask you something." "Very well," he answered, "what is it?" "I dare say you will think me very stupid," I said, "but I don't mind that, and you will be a good boy and tell me, won't you?" "Yes, if I can," he replied, "but what is it?" "Oh, I want to know, please, who philosophers are; I have been asking papa, but all he can tell me is that they are lovers of wisdom, and that doesn't do at all; I dare say you can explain who they are much better." George seemed rather puzzled at first. At last he said, "Why, you see, philosophers are people who think a great deal, and who look at every thing in the abstract." "Oh indeed!" I answered, "but what do you mean by the

abstract?" "That is simple enough," he replied; "you have only to take an adjective, begin it with a capital letter, place the definite article before it, and turn it into an indefinite noun, and there you have your abstract; for instance, Beautiful, adjective with a big B. The Beautiful, a noun and the abstract required; nothing can be plainer than that." "Oh no, of course not," I said; for I often speak in that way myself, "but is that all philosophers do?" "Well, not being a philosopher myself," he replied, "I can't exactly say; but I should think you understand who philosophers are after all this explanation?" "Oh yes," I said, "of course I do; but still—" "Still what?" said George. "Oh, nothing!" I answered, "I suppose that must do, and I am very much obliged to you for telling me so much."

I was not quite satisfied after all with the information I had gained concerning philosophers, namely, that they are lovers of wisdom, who look at things in the abstract; so I ventured to peep into some books in the library on metaphysics, and logic, and mind, and so forth, to see if I could not discover something more definite for myself. I was quite surprised to find at first how easy it all was—the mind, you know, for the books were principally about that. I learnt that the mind was divided as it were into a number of parts, such as memory, reflection, abstraction, and consciousness, and that all our knowledge was gained from ideas of things, that is from hearing, seeing, and touching things. When I had learnt thus much, I took up another book, and found that all I had read before was wrong, though why I could not understand; but as the writers who said so were generally supposed to be very clever, I agreed with them, and took in

their company a rapid survey of mental modifications, which appear to have superseded the mental divisions I mentioned above. By the time I had completed this, I made a grand discovery respecting mind, which I shall generously present to the public for the especial behoof of philosophers; this was, that there is a state of mind of which none of the theorists seem to have had the faintest apprehension; this state or modification of mind, for I suppose I must so term it, I have named mental mystification; and I was so overwhelmed with the magnitude of the discovery I had made, that for some time I was unable to advance any further in my philosophical studies. Indeed I began to fancy I should have to give them up altogether, and rest satisfied with having rendered this one valuable contribution to the science of metaphysics. However, greatly to my delight, I found on again applying myself after a short interval of rest, that the moment this mental mystification was induced, the mind became in the best possible frame for carrying on philosophical investigations, a circumstance which I conjecture may be remotely connected with the well-known fact, that to understand a writer's arguments thoroughly, it is necessary that one's mind should be in the same state of lucidity as his at the time when he placed them on paper. However, whether this be the case or not, it is evident that to pursue any philosophical researches with success the mind must first be brought to assume this peculiar modification. This I found to be a very simple matter. The mere opening of a metaphysical book would occasionally induce this state of mental mystification; but at all times I could bring it on by reading two or three pages in succession rapidly, and without stopping to

consider their meaning, after which I would continue my scientific inquiries with uniform success. In this way I satisfactorily mastered the philosophy of the Unconditioned, the Infinite, and the Absolute, which before I made my grand discovery I had been totally unable to comprehend. On the whole I may shortly sum up the valuable results of my study of the works of the most learned philosophers of modern times as follows.

I now know that mind is different from matter—that mind is every thing and matter nothing. That every body thinks, but that nobody thinks about any thing, like the jolly (and philosophical) young waterman, who "row'd along, thinking of nothing at all;" that the mind is always conscious, but is never conscious of any thing; that all our conventional notions concerning seeing, hearing, and touching, &c., may be placed with fallacies long since exploded, since mental modifications account for all the phenomena of the so-called senses; that men and women ought properly to call themselves Egos, and the rest of the world Non-Egos; that although in practice it is found convenient to assume the existence of a material universe, in theory such an assumption is rather in the way than not; that idiots are the most truly philosophical, and lunatics the most truly reasonable of beings, and that nobody is every body, and every thing is nothing.

I was exceedingly gratified, as may be imagined, at having gained in so comparatively simple a manner so much knowledge of such an abstruse subject. I was a little proud too, I confess, and felt very much inclined to show off before papa as a sort of gentle intimation that he had better be

careful in future, and reflect before he decided that philosophy was "too deep" for me. Besides, my mind revolted from the notion of perpetuating vulgar ideas, by adopting the customary language of everyday life. I should have liked to have introduced some of that philosophical accuracy in thought and expression, with which a course of scientific study had thoroughly imbued me, but somehow or other, I never could bring my mind into the proper state of mystification requisite for treating commonplace matters in a philosophical manner; indeed, I often found myself, from the force of habit, relapsing into old-fashioned and erroneous modes of speech, just as if I had never studied philosophy at all, and talking in the most ordinary way of chairs and tables, and so forth, totally oblivious of the fact that such common objects have no existence in the Hamiltonian theory of the Unconditioned. However, I was determined I would make an effort to treat an ordinary subject metaphysically; so, one day, when poor papa was laid up with the gout, I remember now, it was in Lent, because he always has an attack about that time of the year, I was saying how sorry I was, and I hoped he would be better soon, and so on (the usual remarks one makes to invalids, you know), and then thinking it would be a good opportunity to try the experiment, I added, "Is it gout in the abstract, papa?" "No, my dear," he replied, "in the great toe." I was shocked beyond measure, but I always fancied papa had very little sense of the dignity of psychology.

After this rebuff, for I felt it as such, I was forced to give up practical philosophy, and I very soon found my theoretical knowledge slipping from my memory for want of a kindred

soul with whom I might discuss the Infinite and the Absolute. I discovered too that society does not appreciate philosophy, at all events in a girl, and that I should run the chance of being considered too clever by eligible members of the opposite sex, if I appeared to have any real knowledge of such a subject, so I thought it the wisest plan to keep my metaphysical learning to myself. If it had been less accurate, I should not have hesitated to display it, for men don't mind a girl who pretends to be "up" in some deep subject of which she has in truth but the merest smattering. They will most likely consider, for men are so conceited, that she has applied herself to its study with the object of pleasing them by selecting something suited to their superior intellectual capacities, while all dread of rivalry will be dismissed from their minds the moment she opens her mouth, since she cannot fail every time she utters a sentence to commit a multitude of unconscious blunders.

You will remember that the reason of my turning my attention to philosophy was a desire to ascertain what kind of people philosophers were, neither papa nor George being able to give me much information upon the point. I cannot say that I satisfied my curiosity, for although I read many philosophical works, of their authors I learnt but little. I was therefore rather glad when papa one day lately began talking again about Mr. Mill, the modern philosopher. When he spoke of him first, it was at the time of a general election, for I remember papa observing that, although he was a staunch Conservative, he was not sorry that Mr. Mill, who it appears is a dreadful Radical, had been elected member of Parliament for Westminster, because as a philosopher he

would not be likely to be led away by mere party cries, but would as it were stand aloof from the "mob of the House of Commons," and occupy an exalted position by himself, where he would sit in silent majesty, surveying with calm philosophic eye the unpatriotic struggles for place and power carried on beneath him, in which he, in the pride of his stupendous intellect, would disdain to take a part. Papa went on to say that Mr. Mill would in all probability speak but seldom, and then only when some question of vital importance to the nation was being debated, and that when he rose an attentive senate would listen in hushed admiration to the words of wisdom that would be distilled from his lips. Although nominally an advanced Liberal, he (papa) did not think Mr. Mill would be likely to display any violent party-spirit, since it would be of greater importance both to him and to the House, that he should preserve a philosophical impartiality than that he should exhibit a bias in any direction, for the sake of supporting one side. Calculating therefore upon that discretion which is inherent in the nature of every truly philosophic mind, papa considered that it would be Mr. Mill's office, when he condescended to speak in the House to intervene in a kind of judicial capacity, and to deliver an opinion based upon the highest metaphysical principles, to which all would give a willing adhesion, as if aware that it came from a superior being, who dwelt in a region of eternal thought. And more than this, he had such confidence in the man as a philosopher, that he felt convinced that he (Mr. Mill) would exercise his influence and authority with the sole object of allaying party strife, soothing the passions of contending foes, and

calming the animosities of faction, so that in the end he might transform the House from a bloody battle-field into a peaceful Arcadian retreat.

However, in a very short time after papa had expressed himself to this effect, he began to grumble excessively when any allusion was made to parliamentary affairs, and occasionally to come out with some very violent remarks upon the folly of sending people into parliament who looked at every thing through a pair of yellow spectacles, and set up for being regenerators of mankind before they knew any thing of practical life. Of course this was all Greek to us, and it struck me that papa's mind had in all probability entered that peculiar phase of mystification to which I have already alluded, and that if we waited patiently we might expect to see the matter elucidated. And so it was, for hearing papa utter Mr. Mill's name with special emphasis, and in accents of disapprobation, as he sat reading the *Times* one evening, I ventured in a conciliatory tone to say, "What has the poor gentleman done, papa dear, that you should speak in such an angry way of him?" "Done!" replied papa with great vehemence, "what has he done? Why every thing that he ought not to have done, to be sure." "Dear me," I said, "what a pity! I thought he was going to turn out something so wonderful." "Humph." That was all the answer papa vouchsafed to give me. The fact is he knew he had made a mistake in his opinion of Mr. Mill, but he would not admit it, for he cannot bear ever to acknowledge that he has been in the wrong. But when he had become a little calmer, he introduced the subject again of his own accord, and gave us certainly a very shocking account of Mr. Mill's

behaviour. Instead of taking his stand, as we supposed he would have done, upon some lofty eminence supremely indifferent to the petty squabbles of the inferior beings by whom he was surrounded, it seems that he allied himself with an individual whose name I cannot bring myself to write, so odious has his conduct, as reported to us by papa, caused him to appear in our eyes. Suffice it to say that the very mildest epithet papa ever applies to him is that of Brummagem Brutus, and when he does so, he says, quoting some dreadfully vulgar American writer, that he is "combinin morril truth with phrases sech as strikes;" that he occupied the same seat with him, and not content with thus debasing himself, soon began to grovel with the lowest of the low, and, in league with men who had not the slightest claim to be considered fit company for a philosopher, used his best endeavours to inflame the angry passions of the multitude, and all this under the specious pretext of helping the working man. When we heard this dreadful account, of course we cried "What a wretch!" but papa, after pondering for a short time, said, "Angelina, my dear, will you fetch me Mr. Mill's *Political Economy* out of the library? I think the author viewed the working man with less favour when he wrote that treatise than he does now." I brought the book, and papa opened it, and soon found the passage he required. "These," said he, "are Mr. Mill's words: 'As soon as any idea of equality enters the mind of an ordinary English working man, his head is turned by it. When he ceases to be servile, he becomes insolent.' Book I. chap. vii. § 5. This is the fifth edition of the book, published only five years ago. I suppose Mr. Mill did not suspect, when he penned

the sentence I have read, that he would ever require to be carried into Parliament on a working man's back. It will be more respectful to his new friends if in future editions he expunge the passage. However," added papa, with rather an awkward attempt at jocosity, "our philosophic friend has just indulged in a new vagary. What do you suppose he wishes to do now? Why to give the franchise to women." I did not make any remark upon this, for I thought I should like to know what the franchise was first, as I have never any objection to being given any thing, that is to say, if it is worth having. Presently papa continued, and said what folly it was, and how silly people must be to imagine it would do women any good to give them a vote; so then I knew that a vote and the franchise were the same, and I must say I do not agree with papa. Why should not women have a vote as well as men? It is, I think, quite a redeeming feature in Mr. Mill's character, that of his own accord he should exert himself to procure something for us for which we never so much as asked, or as far as most of us are concerned, even so much as thought of. Now, however, that the question has been forced upon our notice, I plainly see to what a condition of degradation the self-styled lords of the creation have reduced our sex, by depriving them of the inestimable privilege of voting for members of Parliament. It is worse than slavery, I positively declare, and I for one shall never be satisfied until the odious restriction is removed. How useful too, the privilege would be to us when we did get it! They say that at the next general election young Topsawyer, Sir Thomas Topsawyer's eldest son, will come forward and contest the county, upon Conservative principles. Only fancy if such were to be the

case, what an advantage it would be to me to have a vote! "Miss Gushington, I am come to solicit your vote and interest, may I depend upon your support at the coming election?" There, that is what he would say, or something similar. Of course I should simper and hesitate, and declare that I had not made up my mind; that my views were certainly Conservative, and that I should wish to support a Conservative candidate, but that the fact of the matter was, I was not quite satisfied as to the soundness of his principles,—would he kindly state what they were a little more fully? Whereupon we should have a most interesting tête à tête, entirely confidential, the upshot of which would be that I should allow him to go away with the impression that I was a girl who knew how to appreciate a man of sense, and was only hindered by conscientious scruples from at once promising to vote for him. Well, a few days after such an interview, I should expect to receive, from a perfectly unknown source, a magnificent solitaire, or a handsome bracelet, emeralds and diamonds, I am so fond of emeralds, which I should accept of course, since, not knowing whence it came, I could not return it. Then a short time before the day of election, young Topsawyer would come and canvas me again, and I would tell him candidly that I had made up my mind to support him, on condition that he would pledge his word to bring in, with all convenient speed, a Bill for the better Observance of Leap Year, and also give his vote in favour of the immediate Abolition of Old Bachelors, or, at all events, for the establishment by the Government of a Joint Asylum for them and for Old Maids; and when he had agreed to these conditions, I would promise him my vote.

Then, again, what a hold over their husbands the posses-

sion of the franchise would give to married women. When one's husband assumed as a matter of course that one would vote for Mr. So-and-so, how conveniently one could urge that one had nothing to wear, and that one could never think of going to the poll less richly dressed than Mrs. Such-an-one, an opposition voter. All that vulgar locking up in public-houses of the free and independent electors, too, would be effectually done away with, for surely if a trip to Paris, say, free of all expense, could not raise in one's breast a conscientious objection to avail oneself of one's electoral privileges, where would be the use of a conscience at all?

But setting aside these substantial gains, with what a halo of romance would the extension of the franchise to women invest the political world! In the present degraded condition of our sex, a girl who should confess to a knowledge of politics, would without fail suffer an immediate depreciation in matrimonial value, but were Mr. Mill's proposal accepted modern courtship might actually be based upon political principles. To explain myself more clearly. There still exist, I am compelled to admit, a number of young people, who, looking for what they term happiness in the marriage state, endeavour, before they fix upon partners for life, to ascertain whether the objects of their affection possess congenial dispositions, good temper, amiability, and so forth. Now I think all sensible people will agree with me, that such a course of procedure can never effect the desired end, since an individual's conduct before marriage is no sort of criterion as to what it will be after marriage. A woman may be all smiles, and a man all suavity during courtship, and yet when married they may

live a cat-and-dog life together. But substitute for congeniality of disposition similarity of political opinions, and you have at once an infallible test. Moreover, a girl would have some chance of moulding a man's political opinions to hers by persuasion and argument, whereas she might waste a lifetime in endeavouring to turn a bad temper into a good one; for political opinions are very easily changed, not so natural dispositions, or even acquired bad habits. What a triumph, too, it would be for a girl to have transformed a rabid Radical, for instance, into a Constitutional-Liberal, or a Liberal into a Liberal-Conservative!

Again, take the case of an engaged couple. How do such persons act under the present system? Why they pledge themselves in the most solemn way to write to one another a long letter every day. And what do they write about? Love! A man's love-letters I admit are in a general way remarkable for exhibiting an extraordinary power of condensing a vast amount of affection into a small space, but a girl will frequently ramble over page after page in the most senseless manner. And what a degradation I say it is that a girl should be compelled, for want of other topics, to fill a long love-letter with nothing but love! Give women votes, and all this will be altered. The man will treat his sweetheart to an exhaustive review, say on Foreign affairs, and she will reply with an elaborate essay, pointing out how advantageously the profession of a policy of neutrality enables a nation to shirk its responsibilities. The absurdities of love-letters, which, as the papers say, so often "convulse the court" in a breach of promise case, will no longer be perpetrated. Lovers, instead of corresponding under such ridiculous names

as Tiddlepops and Tootleums, will assume some parliamentary pseudonym. The man will sign himself Gladstone, say, and the woman Walpole. When they wish to send affectionate remembrances to one another, they will no longer talk in a vague way of millions of kisses, but the one will send his sweetheart as many salutes as the Government would lose pounds in revenue were the duty taken off Havanna cigars; while she, on her part, launching into statistics, will return him the same number as there are reprieved murderers now confined in the prisons of the United Kingdom. Thus they will encourage a common spirit of inquiry, and blend in a most natural manner affection and instruction. The reformation, too, will extend to lovers' presents. An elegantly bound copy of Tennyson's "Princess; a Medley," will give place to a voluminous Blue Book, also a Medley; and Parliamentary Companions, and Hansard's Debates, will be gifts far more highly valued than the costly but useless trinkets so much the fashion in the present day.

I confess that I am fairly dazzled with the delightful prospect disclosed by Mr. Mill's scheme. Who but a philosopher would ever have conceived the grand idea of surrounding with sentimental (I use the word in its best sense), with sentimental associations a subject at first sight so distasteful to the female mind as politics? Poor papa has become so unreasonably enraged upon this point that it is useless to argue with him. He will have it that dear Mr. Mill,—yes, I will say 'dear' Mr. Mill; what does it matter with a philosopher, and a middle-aged one too?—having achieved a reputation before he entered Parliament, thinks it necessary to attract attention and make himself remarkable in some way,

in order to sustain the prestige on the strength of which mainly he was elected, and thus keep himself from sinking into a mere nonentity; and as most of the proposals that have from time to time been put forward upon the question of reform have become the hobbies or private property, so to speak, of certain members of the House, nothing has been left for him but woman suffrage, which every one else is afraid to take up for fear of being laughed at, but which he can advocate without dread of ridicule, from which his calling of philosopher and his reputation for superabundant wisdom effectually shield him. Of course neither my sisters nor myself take this view of Mr. Mill's conduct; we fully believe that wishing to restore to the world of politics some of that peacefulness and purity which prevailed, as poets tell us, in primitive times, he, more farseeing than his contemporaries, perceives that such a result can only be brought about through the influence of woman. He, dear man, knows better than any of our so-called statesmen and lawgivers, how comprehensive is woman's capacity for good in the world, and how simple-minded and guileless she is. Disgusted with the petty squabbles, the paltry jealousies, the corruption, the deceit, and the bribery which cloud the political horizon, he is determined to disperse them all by introducing the feminine element, that beautiful, never-to-be-bribed, incorruptible unchangeable part of creation, whose enforced abnegation of political rights has been the cause of all the evils that mankind has ever beheld.

Now I see the good of philosophers. They are nice amiable gentlemen, who go about the world, not looking for stones, as I had supposed, but looking for grievances, and

when they cannot discover any, kindly inventing some, and persuading people that they are oppressed, ground down, and degraded, and all sorts of dreadful things, but that if they will only take a nostrum which they (these good-hearted philosophers) have been all their lives compounding, as a panacea for every evil with which mankind has been afflicted, they will be perfectly happy, that is to say, until their good friends the philosophers have had time to invent another fresh grievance, and persuade them they are perfectly miserable, when the same process will be repeated, and similar doses of flattery, intimidation, and exaggeration swallowed, with a similar valuable result.

RITUALISM

"CURATE.—Wanted in a small parish where the duty is light. Good voice and principles indispensable. Stipend moderate. Apply by letter, prepaid, to the Rev. A. B., the Rectory, Mudbury."

There! This is actually the advertisement papa would have inserted in the *Ecclesiastical Gazette*, if it hadn't been for mamma, who said (and we all thought the same—I mean myself and my sisters) that it would scarcely have been fit even for the pages of the *Record*, where people advertise for Christian young men as curates, as if they expected Mahomedans or Mormons to offer themselves. "Good voice and principles" indeed! I can't imagine what papa could have been dreaming of when he wrote it, for he must have known how dreadfully "low" any allusion to a clergyman's voice invariably sounds; and as for principles, I am sure it was superfluous to mention them, as one always expects those things as a matter of course. Well, poor papa was very much put out at our raising such objections; but mamma insisted upon his not sending it, saying she should be quite ashamed if people thought us at all Low church, as they would be sure to do if they read such an advertisement as that. Poor dear

papa answered that at all events he was not High church, and he did not wish to have a High-church curate: but we all said, Nonsense! that we were certain he was in reality High, although he might not think he was, and that we were sure he would not wish to be considered vulgar, or out of the fashion: so at last we prevailed (as I knew we should from the beginning) and agreed that he was moderately High church, and of course required a curate of the same, or allowing for the difference of age, of more advanced opinions.

I forgot to tell you that the reason why we required a curate was that Mr. Minikin was leaving. He was always a poor creature, miserably off, and, what is worse, married, and his wife not—you know—not a desirable person to be acquainted with—in fact not quite presentable—I might almost say little better than a servant in manners, only I don't like to be hard upon the poor thing, now she is gone too; and at last they seemed hardly able to support their family, several (I forget how many),—and the children were, some of them, scarcely half dressed, so of course we could not think of keeping a person of that kind.

Well, when the advertisement was given up, papa recollected that he had a friend at Cambridge who would be very likely to know of a young man to suit him; so he wrote to him, and, in reply, Mr. Plane Sphere recommended the Rev. Gilbert Alban, a young clergyman just ordained. As fellow and tutor of his college, Mr. Sphere said that the duties of his office hindered him from becoming acquainted, except in a very limited degree, with the students individually; still he could conscientiously say that, having seen nothing to the contrary, Mr. Alban's conduct during his college course had

been most exemplary. Of his religious opinions he (Mr. Sphere) was naturally not in a position to judge, but as Mr. Alban had been a regular attendant at morning chapel, even in the coldest weather, he presumed they were orthodox. He might however add that he was a member of the E.C.U. This was the purport of the letter, which papa considered rather vague, and said he should have liked to have had a more definite report of the young man. However, mamma said that a fellow and tutor of a college must know best, and that it would be acting very rudely to make further inquiries. So it was determined that he should come. We puzzled ourselves very much in endeavouring to find out what the letters E.C.U. could stand for. I said that it was no doubt the name of some learned society, and that Mr. Alban as a member of it would place its initials after his name, just as we see people write F.R.S., F.G.S., F.S.A., and so on; and mamma, Katey, and Helen thought so too. However we were quite mistaken, as we afterwards discovered, for instead of being a learned society, it was just the reverse. But to resume my subject. Mr. Alban came in due time, such a nice young man, you can't think; a little peculiar in appearance perhaps, because he had shaved off his whiskers with the exception of half-an-inch on the cheek bone; but *so* correct—no collar or neck-tie, merely a spotless belt of what might have been white cardboard, from its rigid appearance, round his throat (of course fastened on to a hair-shirt), and a coat which, worn by a layman, would have seemed unnecessarily long, but on him looked severely apostolic.

Mamma was taken with him at once, and thought him so interesting, such a contrast to that horrible Mr. Minikin, with

his dreadfully careworn countenance. You can't think what fun we had when we first showed him over the church; for as papa was engaged, and mamma had a cold, I and my sisters took him to see it.

Mr. Alban confessed that Mudbury had a fine church, judging from its exterior, but when he saw the inside he seemed perfectly horrified at what he called the work of the Vandals, and made us laugh so with his clever and witty remarks; for instance, he likened the pulpit, reading-desk, and clerk's seat to a three-decker (I quite saw the analogy), and the pews to sheep-pens (how suggestive! the pastor looking down upon his flock). Some of his expressions, too, were so forcible and original, such as churchwarden's gothic, churchwarden's decoration (whitewash, you know), that they carried conviction with them at once without any need of argument, with which, I am glad to say, he dispensed entirely, except on one occasion when he bade us observe the inappropriateness of placing the royal arms over the chancel-arch, because the lion and the unicorn were "fighting for the crown" (which never struck me before, but of course they are), and fighting in a church is such a horrible idea that I agreed with him, it ought to be taken down and broken up for fire-wood, together with the board on which the list of benefactors to the parish is legibly painted—for certainly the church is the last place where the good deeds of one's ancestors should be brought before one's notice. You must not fancy, however, that Mr. Alban's remarks were entirely confined to fault-finding; on the contrary, he suggested some most important improvements, such as removing the Lord's Prayer and the Creed from the east wall (which, as he urged, were quite unnecessary

now that prayer-books are so cheap), and replacing them by a neat diaper of blue-and-gold. I said I thought that would be much prettier, although I didn't quite understand what was meant by diaper, which I had never heard of before except in connexion with table-cloths and dinner-napkins. The pews, pulpit, and reading-desk, the gallery, and the organ (a horrible squeaking old thing that cannot be made to sound at all in dry weather, the wood shrinks so), we agreed with him should be done away with as soon as possible. We told Mr. Alban we were afraid the churchwardens would not fall in with his views, as the fittings of the church, although so dreadfully heretical, were yet in very good repair, having mostly been put up about thirty years ago: so he devised such a clever plan to outwit them, which (as I am sure you would never guess it) I will tell you. It was this, that we should each of us commit some mischief whenever we could do so without being observed, such as pick off the paint, or knock away the whitewash, so that in time the things might look shabby, and furnish us with an excuse for removing them altogether. We approved of the plan immensely, and I took the poker out of the fireplace in the vestry, and knocked such a lot of whitewash off the wall close by one of the churchwardens' pews, and made a great scratch on the benefaction board, which nearly erased the munificent donation of Mr. Solomon Dibble, late of this parish, who devised the annual sum of four-and-twopence to the poor for ever; while Katey and Helen broke into the organ-loft, disarranged a number of the pipes, and stuffed up several with paper. Altogether I don't think we ever enjoyed ourselves in church so much before.

However, I will not weary you with a detailed account of how we commenced our operations, but would rather exhibit some of the results, which, considering the short time that has elapsed since we first thought of introducing ritualistic simplicity, are, I consider, really marvellous. In the first place, we have dismissed the clerk, a poor feeble old man, whose quavering voice always reminded me of the bleating of a sheep; and Mr. Alban has been at such pains to provide him with a comfortable maintenance in the workhouse, and yet he is said to be very discontented and miserable—but it is reported that he is not likely to live long, and a happy release it would be at his time of life. Then the organ has been taken down and replaced by a harmonium, which we have hired for the present until we can raise enough money to buy a first-rate instrument. I play on it—not the old-fashioned slow tunes we used to have, but correct plain-song hymns, which are much more lively and inspiriting. You know those beautiful lines of the poet—was it Pope? I can't say, I have such a bad memory—

> "And now the Chapel's silver bell you hear,
> That summons you to all the pride of prayer:
> Light quirks of music, broken and uneven,
> Make the soul dance upon a jig to Heaven."

Are they not applicable? Only, instead of the jig, I would substitute the fashionable *troistemps* waltz.

Of course we intone—I mean Mr. Alban intones. Poor papa tried it, urged by mamma, but was obliged to give it up, as he has no ear, and could not keep upon G if it were ever so. A great many of the parishioners object to it, (as they

do to most of our improvements,) and say they can't understand what is said half so well as before: but old Betty Hardwick (to whom Mr. Alban has generously given such a nice warm scarlet cloak) said she thought it beautiful, and she is as deaf as a post too; so I am sure other people need not complain. I am quite enthusiastic, and have been making decorations which we intend to put up at Christmas, and leave for good; crosses and triangles in circles, which I know are symbolical of something, but I forget at this moment what—it is immaterial, I will ask Mr. Alban. Then there is illumination, which I have long desired to learn, but have never had an opportunity until now; and I am getting on capitally, and have already illuminated several texts in thirteenth-century letters, (our church is said to have been built somewhere about that period,) and although I say it who ought not, they look excessively pretty. Papa (who will break out now and then) found fault with them on the ground of their illegibility; but as I replied, they were not intended to be read, or they would have been printed in hideously clear Roman characters; they were merely pieces of decoration placed in the church for effect, and to accustom the people to the sight of gaudy, I mean gorgeous colouring, for which the text is nothing more than the vehicle, to be disguised as much as possible. But it must not be fancied, I added, that the words might altogether be done away with, and a pattern of some kind substituted, for then we should be without an answer to objectors, which we always have now; for even Protestants (or Proddies, as Mr. Alban so facetiously calls them) and Evangelicals (or Jellies) are afraid to say very much when we tell them that such and such a decoration is

really a text of Scripture. George, too, who paid us a flying visit a short time back, sneered at my work, and said I had better illuminate the bishops, priests, and deacons, as they seemed to want it most; but I was so shocked at his language that I never said a word. I knew how it would be when I heard he had been staying with General Drumble. All that set are frightfully 'low.' It is quite shocking to think how little will serve to alter a person's opinions. George had quite different ideas once, as I will tell you by-and-by.

No one can imagine how much we are indebted to Mr. Alban for spreading correct principles throughout the parish, which he has not shrunk from doing, even at the risk of sending people over to the Dissenting chapel. Instead of the stupid tracts Mr. Minikin used to distribute, such as 'The Dairymaid's Daughter,' 'The Bellows-mender of Bengal, or the Conscientious Chessman,' Mr. Alban gives the poor people works of a far different character and tendency; for instance, only to mention the names of a few: 'Why I love my Prayer-book;' 'Come to Confession,' 'Masses for the Million,' by the author of 'The Shirt, the Symbol, and the Surplice;' 'The Incense Burners, a tale of Persecution,' and many others of the same stamp. A few of the parishioners too are deeply impressed with his teaching; and old widow Williams invariably brings her prayer-book to church wrapped up carefully in a blue cotton handkerchief, ever since Mr. Alban told her to value it above every other book.

But the majority, I regret to say, are entirely opposed to our improvements, which they style dangerous innovations. The first symptoms of discontent exhibited itself in the exceedingly rude behaviour to me of an old man over eighty

years of age, whom up to that time we always regarded as quite a respectable character; indeed, as he once worked for papa, we have allowed him for some years sixpence a month as a kind of reward for his general good conduct. One day, however, he was standing at the gate of his cottage as I passed by, looking, I must confess, very clean and neat—but one should never judge by appearances—and I stopped, as I usually did, to talk to him and ask after his rheumatism. I must mention here that I was wearing one of those long rosary necklaces made of jet beads, with a cross suspended to it: *that* was not jet, only imitation, but no one could have told the difference. Well, I observed that while I was speaking he kept his eyes fixed upon this ornament, so I thought it a good opportunity of improving the occasion, and holding it out in my hand, I said, "I am glad to find, William, that you are admiring this. Every one ought to wear one: you should have one round your neck;" and then I added, in a persuasive tone, "It would look very nice over your smock frock."

The old man coughed, and then said deliberately, "I baint admiring of it, miss: I wears one in my heart continual, so I ha'nt got no call to wear a carved himage outside; but in course you may do as you please, miss."

I was thunder-struck. The idea of his venturing not only to differ from the Rector's daughter, but to have an opinion of his own upon such a subject! To be sure he spoke very quietly, some might say respectfully; but those quiet people are always the worst. As soon as I had recovered from my astonishment, I spoke quite severely to him, and said, "Nonsense, William, how dare you to talk in that ridiculous way.

You know very well it is a physical impossibility for you to have any thing of the kind. I shall certainly tell papa of your behaviour."

"Very well, miss," he answered, "you are free to do so, and I am sorry if I have offended you."

I did not stop to hear any more, as I was out of all patience with him. Sorry, indeed! well he might be; but I don't believe he was a bit. It is always the way with ignorant people, they can't bear to be spoken to, although they may know it is for their good all the while. When I returned home I told papa, for I was determined to do so while the affair was fresh in my mind, and urged him as a duty he owed to society to stop the old man's allowance; but papa, who, I must say, has very little self-respect in some things, said that he did not think it would be worth while to stop it, taking into consideration old William's age. So the sixpence a month was continued, but I have taken good care never to speak to the old man again. No girl who knows what is due to herself ought to run the risk of being insulted in such a way a second time. However, although people began to talk of the occurrence all over the parish, I made up my mind to endure persecution; and so sent to Dashford for a very much larger cross, which I wore in place of the other, and displayed ostentatiously on every possible occasion; and frequently, when I have noticed the farmers (who are our bitterest opponents) and others eyeing me askance at church, I have felt quite like a martyr, and perfectly willing to be burnt or any thing rather than give up my correct principles.

The rude behaviour of old William was, as I have said, the first symptom of discontent that showed itself; but in a

very short time afterwards dissensions and feuds, fostered mainly by the Dissenters, I have no doubt, sprang up throughout the parish, most of them being directed against us and our "doings," or "goings on." Indeed, papa said he quite disliked to speak to people, he met with such coolness where there had formerly been so much cordiality. The most stormy debates took place at the vestry meetings, and poor papa was quite powerless to check the violent and unguarded language which was too frequently to be heard at them. One of the churchwardens behaved in a scandalous manner towards dear Mr. Alban, declaring that he stirred up strife in the parish, and the sooner he left it the better, with ever so much more to the same effect. As may be imagined these disagreements could not long remain a secret from the world, and in a little while we became quite the talk of the neighbourhood, and all sorts of reports were spread abroad about us, scarcely one of which had the faintest foundation in fact. An account, false in every particular, of "Popish proceedings at Mudbury," found its way into the *Dashford Gazette*, our congregation became thinner and thinner, and an appeal to the bishop was hinted at, so that matters began to look a little serious, but fortunately at a critical juncture we received most opportune aid from a very unexpected quarter.

How this happened I will proceed to explain. Mr. Alban often used to say at the time when the disturbances commenced in the parish, that he had little fear for the ultimate result, for that the temper of the age was such that no violent outburst of Protestant wrath would be sanctioned by the rightminded portion of the community. In support of this

opinion he would bid us observe how much more ready people are to listen to reason, and how much less prone to be carried away by their feelings than they were in former times. In the sixteenth century, for instance, the reformers did not stay to inquire whether the so-called abuses of the Romish Church might not be palliated, and perhaps in part justified; they at once declared them to be abuses, and swept them away. We, who hold that the Reformation was a gigantic mistake, must ever regret the course the reformers adopted, but we are compelled to admit that for the furtherance of the object they had in view no other mode of procedure would have been so fit. Had they stopped to ask themselves whether they were acting fairly, like sensible men, or rashly, like bigots, they would never have effected the desired result.

In like manner, he would say, some thirty years ago an outburst of blind Protestant fury forced a gallant band of men openly to embrace Romanism much sooner than was advantageous for the success of the movement they had originated. We might, however, safely conclude that that would be the last exhibition the nation would ever witness of reason and common sense succumbing to passion and prejudice. Since that time men's opinions had undergone a complete change. A liberal tone pervaded society, and a general tendency was every where displayed to effect a compromise at any price, rather than enter upon such bitter controversies as those which disgraced past generations. All men united in condemning as ungenerous and un-English an attack upon an adversary's principles or doctrines, if it was conducted with the slightest semblance of vehemence or

warmth, and even if a man had right on his side he must be careful not to press his opponent too hard, lest he gave occasion for the latter to cry out for fair play, and to appeal to the public not to listen to one-sided arguments, a mode of defence which would to a certainty enlist their sympathies on his behalf.

For all these reasons, therefore, Mr. Alban said he was satisfied we should tide over the crisis; he only hoped our detractors would redouble their accusations, and make a sufficient number of rash and hasty statements to justify us in appealing to the common sense of all upright and honest Englishmen. The only fear was that our opponents might act with moderation, and he, Mr. Alban, hinted to me what a good thing it would be for us if some friend could be induced to write to the *Dashford Gazette* a virulent denunciation of our doings in Mudbury, plentifully besprinkled with the usual full-flavoured Protestant twaddle, and trotting out for inspection the Holy Inquisition, the horrors of the confessional, the Jesuits, and other well-known Protestant bugbears, in order to give us an opportunity of rebutting the calumnious statements in such moderate and well chosen language as would contrast favourably with the violent and abusive terms employed by our opponents. I was so deeply impressed with the force of Mr. Alban's remarks on this head, that I had serious thoughts of writing such a letter myself, and sending it to the *Dashford Gazette*, of course under a *nom de plume;* but papa, who has some very old-fashioned notions on the subject of principle, happened to hear of my intention, and read me such a lecture, telling me I should be acting meanly and deceitfully, and ever so much more, so I had to give up

the idea altogether, much to my regret. However, about a fortnight afterwards, we were delighted to see in the paper the very letter we had been wishing for, written by a tradesman in Dashford, and headed, "Is Popery to ride rampant through the land? or, Mudbury again." I never was so amused in my life, as when I read it, the charges brought against us were so absurd. We were accused of worshipping an old stone cross that stood in the churchyard, and burning incense before it, of setting up a confessional in the infant school, of playing airs out of the opera of Robert le Diable as voluntaries, of making surplices for the choir boys out of papa's old shirts, of walking in procession through the village, carrying lighted candles in our hands in the middle of the day, and of many other deeds equally ridiculous, and equally false. In addition to these misstatements, the tone of the letter was throughout so violent, and the language in which it was couched so unguarded, not to say, abusive, that we all felt quite a relief when we had read it, being assured that nothing could have been so advantageous to us as its publication. I thought the time was now come when I might act as I judged best for the public good, without consulting other people, so I abstracted a small piece of chalk from the schoolroom, after the schoolmaster had been giving a lesson on the black board, and when nobody saw me, scrawled "No Popery" on the outside of our garden-gate, and on several conspicuous places in the village, in that up and down style of writing affected by the lower orders, to make believe some poor person had done it; and, as I expected would be the case, the next day "No Popery" was written up every where,—amongst other places, on the church-door,—

the idle boys having amused themselves by copying the words I had written, so that my scheme succeeded admirably. Papa was very much annoyed, and, assisted by Mr. Alban, addressed a beautiful letter to the Editor of the *Dashford Gazette*, in which he appealed to all men of common sense to look at the matter in a reasonable light, and not to be led astray by one-sided statements, originating with a narrow-minded clique (it always tells well to insinuate that Protestant statements emanate from a clique); declared that he wished for a full and complete investigation into the abuses, so-called, complained of, when he felt certain that all clear-sighted men of the world would acquit him of any wish to introduce Popish practices into the parish; and ended by denying *seriatim* the charges brought against us, stating that nothing was left of the old cross in the churchyard but the stem, the top having been broken off by the Puritans, that the boys' surplices were made of the best Irish linen, that it would have been impossible to carry lighted candles in the open air on the day alleged, as there was a high wind blowing at the time, and so on, disposing of the rest of the charges in an equally decisive manner.

This letter produced a very good effect. The storm after raging for a short time blew over, the clear-sighted men of the world, who always supposed they had their share of common sense, felt flattered by papa's appeal to their impartial judgment, and unanimously declared that our explanations were perfectly satisfactory, that the statements of our opponents were entirely unfounded, and that they themselves were characterized by a blind and wilful excess of zeal, worthy of the worst days of puritanical bigotry, and that the

attempt to excite animosity against poor dear papa, by chalking up "No Popery," disgraced the members of a civilized community, and showed, plainly enough, that the perpetrators of the evil would condescend to adopt any device however fiendish, in order to blacken the character of an individual who was conspicuous for piety, moderation, good feeling, and gentlemanly behaviour.

The success of our tactics on this occasion proved that Mr. Alban was right when he said that the reaction in public opinion would tide us over the crisis. If ever any thing of the kind should occur in future, we intend to adopt a similar course again, and in addition to request Mr. Whalley to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether he proposes to make an inquiry into the alleged Popish practices at Mudbury. For we think that by so doing we shall make our opponents appear so ridiculous in the eyes of all sensible men, that should they attempt to offer any opposition to our proceedings we could afford to despise it, knowing that at any time we could laugh it down.

You cannot imagine how thankful I feel to dear Mr. Alban for having by his wise foresight suggested a way of escape from our persecutors. I rely upon him more than ever, indeed I do not know how I could exist out of the sphere of his influence.

A talented writer of my own sex[1] has said that, "in Catholic countries the wife's influence is only another name for that of the priest," and I can well imagine it to be so. What an advantage it must be to have, as it were, two con-

[1] Mrs. Mill on the Enfranchisement of Women.

fessors and advisers, one's husband and one's priest; for many things one would not like to tell the former, might be confided to the latter, to the great lightening of one's conscience, and the hindrance of matrimonial quarrels. In a utilitarian point of view, too, confession would have its value, for surely one would feel much happier if one were accustomed to settle one's little bill of sins weekly, instead of keeping a running account all one's lifetime. In church, thanks again to Mr. Alban, I am thoroughly up in my devotional exercises, which I go through every Sunday to the edification of the surrounding worshippers. It was a long time before I could master them all; so that I think the suggestion which George once made as to this very subject might be turned to good practical account. I will give you a sketch of his scheme, which he really had at one time some notion of carrying out.

The idea occurred to him after he had attended service at a High Church temple in London on an Ash-Wednesday, where he appears to have been nearly the only gentleman present, the congregation consisting almost entirely of ladies. I recollect his telling us that the girls (for they were most of them young) were thoroughly up in the service; that they responded in the exact time and place appointed by the rubric, as if they had been drilled; that their voices were pitched in the same key; that they genuflected in unison, and were in all respects perfect models of Church worshippers: but that at one period in the service one of the girls forgot her instructions, and said Amen, or rather A-a-a-men half a second too soon, and so threw the rest out. This little incident suggested to him the idea that a man might make, as he termed it,

a good thing of it by instructing young ladies in the various branches of Church deportment. The plan he intended to adopt would have been this :—He proposed first of all to go through a course of Church services, in places where, as he rather profanely remarked, "they do the thing in style," pay particular attention to all the minutiæ, and make himself thoroughly master of the performance. He would then have taken a large room in a fashionable locality, have had it fitted up as a church, in the latest and most correct taste, and advertised for lady pupils, to whom he would have given lessons in Church deportment. His terms would have been high, but would have been regulated in part by the *ton* of his pupils, as ascertained by their place of residence. He would have guaranteed in a certain number of lessons to give a perfect knowledge of the art in all its branches. He would have formed his classes according to the tenets of his pupils, that is, according as they were more or less High Church, for of course he would only have taken fashionable girls. The class in which to place a young lady he would have decided by ascertaining what place of worship she attended, and would have regulated his instructions in like manner. His pupils would have been taught how to *pose* themselves in the various rubrical and canonical attitudes required at different parts of the service, how to respond in unison, and how to pray in a mediæval posture, which he had elaborated, after intense study, from a comparison of the practice of the early Church, assisted by an inspection of some drawings in the Cotton and Harleian MSS. Instruction in the Marriage Service, special attention being given to the proper pronunciation of the words "I will," would have been

an extra. To add piquancy to his lectures, and to increase their attractiveness, eligible young men, with vouchers from the mammas of the girls, would have been allowed to attend free. George thought that the means which his lectures would thus afford of introducing young people to suitable partners for life would have made them deservedly popular. For a five-guinea fee parties about to be married could have rehearsed the Marriage Service in his lecture-room; and when specially desired, George himself would have attended, at St. George's, Hanover-square, at the actual celebration, would have *posed* the performers, given the time, and regulated the pitch and tremulousness of the voices according to the dowry of the bride and the age of the bridegroom. Piety and fervour, not being absolute requisites, would also have been charged as extras, but would have been equally guaranteed after a course of lectures.

This was his plan; and considering the intricacy of most of the ritualistic evolutions, I think it would be a good thing if some one were to take the hint and carry it out.

CHRISTMAS-TIDE

NOT plain Christmas, or Christmas time, you will observe, but Christmas-tide; and, much more 'correct' it is, I can assure you, to speak thus. We should, as Mr. Alban has been at great pains to teach me, always endeavour, in making mention of 'seasons' or festivals, or indeed any thing ecclesiastical, to use expressions which we may know upon good authority to have been in vogue in pre-*de*formation periods, in order that we may gradually accustom ourselves, and the friends we may wish to influence, to mediæval modes or forms of speech, and so pave the way for future improvements. Want of attention to these apparently trivial details frequently annuls the work of years of patient instruction, and I have heard of a case where a really first-rate subject for conversion—a young girl of weak intellect but of most sensitive disposition—progressing at a rapid rate in the right direction, was driven back into the slough of ultra-protestantism by the incautious employment of an unfamiliar although quite correct expression by her spiritual adviser. You see then how necessary it is that we should be particular as to our phraseology: and this reminds me to bid you notice the word Deformation, which I have made use of a few lines above.

What do you think it stands for? Why, for Reformation to be sure, what is called *the* Reformation. Mr. Alban very justly says, we, in spreading 'correct' principles, are endeavouring as much as possible to do away with the demoralizing effects of that deplorable occurrence, which, far from reforming the Church of England, in reality deformed it; and therefore it is our duty, our bounden duty, when we speak of the so-called Reformation, to term it the Deformation, whereby our neighbours and friends, becoming accustomed to hearing that unhappy movement ridiculed, gradually contract a kind of contempt for it themselves; and, what is of far more importance in our eyes, we adhere to the strict and literal truth.

However, I am wandering from my subject; but as it is only just lately that I have learnt the value of language when rendered subservient to its proper ends, you will excuse a little parade of my newly-acquired knowledge. Oh yes, to be sure, Christmas. Well, it is much the same as usual, you know—mince-pies, and plum-puddings, and flannel garments for the poor people, and compliments of the season, and so forth. I expect to enjoy it in a quiet way; for although at one time, as perhaps you may remember, I was rather low-spirited, and talked about going into a convent and leading a life of asceticism, since then dear Mr. Alban and I have been comparing souls (a most profitable occupation), and he assures me it would amount to perfect wickedness if I were to give way to gloomy thoughts and melancholy feelings, and tells me I ought to strive against them; and indeed he puts things in such a pleasant light, and doesn't object to any amusement he sees I am fond of, that we get on capitally.

I always know when Christmas is near by one thing, and that is mince-pies. There is an old saying, which I dare say you are aware of, that for every mince-pie one eats before Christmas, one will have a month's happiness in the new year; so whenever we go to a dinner party, and a gentleman next me asks me if I won't take a mince-pie, I say first of all, "No, thanks," and that gives him an opportunity of returning to the charge, and pressing me again to take one, adding as an inducement the month's happiness, which he is certain to offer with the air of a person who is starting a perfectly original idea; so of course I laugh, and say "Dear me! how funny—is it really so?" (as if I had never heard the saying before). "No, not a whole one, please, just a little piece to taste." This I say, not because I could not eat a whole mince-pie, but because I know that he will then with great self-satisfaction make the following reply: "Well, Miss Gushington, if you really will not take a whole one, let me share one with you, and then we shall have a fortnight's happiness apiece;" whereat I laugh (quite naturally), and he laughs, and the company in the immediate neighbourhood laugh, as if he had said a really witty thing; for I have always noticed that if you want people to laugh, you had better make a bad old joke than a good new one, for, in the first place, every one knows the point of the former, and in the second people laugh out of pure compassion for the perpetrator, because by experience they know how painful is the position of one who having delivered himself of a Joe Miller is disappointed of the expected titter. Consequently, when the mince-pie episode occurred, it struck me as a matter of course that we must be getting near Christmas, and that we should soon be

very busy, and in the midst of preparations of all kinds for the gaities and duties of the season.

Now I can fancy exactly the sort of Christmas you expect me to describe, what I call Christmas-tale Christmas, and I will give you an idea of what I mean by that.

Christmas-day—a fine frosty morning—ground completely covered with snow as crisp as can be—seasonable weather this. Fathers of families punctual at church, families and all—young ladies, red noses and petticoats—boys, chilblains, red knuckles and comforters. The old baronial Hall or fine Elizabethan Mansion (always one or the other in Christmas stories) transformed into a perfect bower, with clusters of holly and evergreens covering deer's antlers, picture-frames (surrounding portraits of eminent ancestors), and filling every available nook and corner, the whole beautifully lit up by a magnificent fire on the hearth (yule-log in a proper state of combustion of course), making the holly-berries blush a deeper scarlet as they ogle their fair companions on the big mistletoe, and sending forth a flood of ruddy light to welcome relations rich and poor, especially poor (this is always a great day for poor relations), who meet once a year on an equality with their more favoured kindred, because it's Christmas.

In they come, one carriage-load after another. Old gentlemen muffled up in wraps, red of cheeks and blue of noses, with merry Christmas and a happy New Year—same to you and many of them—seasonable weather this—regular old-fashioned Christmas—makes one feel quite young again—a great deal of make-believe that it's just the kind of weather they like, so seasonable they repeat; nothing loth, however, to have a good warm at the fire, for they are shivering and

shaking all over, notwithstanding their enjoyment of the cold. Christmas fire, indeed—that's seasonable too. Hallo, my boy, merry Christmas to you—hearty man this, who thinks it looks genial, and jolly, and English, and ever so much more, to knock the breath out of your body by a sounding slap on the back, and make your knuckles crack again as he shakes hands with you, and at this season crushes every bone by the extra vehemence he imparts to his gripe, because it's Christmas. No fire for the hearty man—he doesn't mind the cold, not he—likes it, bless you. This is the way to get warm if you are cold, and off he sets stamping up and down the hall, and slapping his chest with his arms like a hackney-coachman, because he thinks it looks jolly. Just a little drop of brandy after your drive, eh? Well, says one old gentleman, what do you say? seasonable I think—only up to the pretty, Mary—and how is your sweetheart, eh, Mary?—merry Christmas to you both; and the old boys chuckle as they toss off their glasses, and wink feebly at the good-looking servant-maid, who has decked herself out in finery and smart cap-ribbons, regardless of 'missus,' for isn't it Christmas?

All arrived? No, there's uncle Richard, and aunt, and the little ones. Thomas, just look out, perhaps you may hear them coming—'Yes, Sir, carriage acomin' along the i' road, Sir;' and sure enough the sound of a horse's trot is distinctly heard through the clear frosty air, and presently up drives uncle Richard, crunching the frozen snow with the wheels of his trap as he draws up with a 'wo-ho, lass' at the door. In they come, uncle Richard's whiskers stiff with icicles, aunt a mere animated bundle of shawls; the boys and girls tumble out and take off wraps and comforters before the

blazing fire. Chorus, *ad lib.*, Merry Christmas and a happy New Year. Same to you, and many of them. Now we really are all here? Yes.—Dinner on the table, Sir. Just in time, egad—off we go—hope you've a good appetite. Splendid piece of beef—really splendid—'pon my word splendid—as for the turkey, Uncle William knows where *that* came from—thirty pounds weight if it's an ounce. Present from my brother-in-law (host *sotto voce* to right-hand neighbour) every year, and I don't think he ever sent us a finer bird. Indeed, but I can't take my eyes off that beef—perfect picture—your own feeding? Oh yes, bred and fed on the estate—magnificent beast he was too, over twenty score a quarter. You don't say so. What do you give your fat stock now? Oh, roots, mangolds and swedes, and hay. Any cake? Oh yes, cake and a little meal, that's all. Dear me, pray don't begin upon that dreadful farming, it's quite a mania with my husband, he loses lots of money by it.—My dear, my dear—Oh, nonsense, I know you do. Ahem, sore subject evidently. My good lady doesn't understand these matters, ahem. Wiggins; a glass of wine with you? With pleasure—out of date I know—keep up old customs—so do I—to be sure, especially at this season of the year. Thomas, sherry, Mr. Wiggins, and Thomas, take the champagne round to the ladies, no—the champagne, do you hear?—that's it. Grandfather, here's your very good health, and I hope you may dine with us for many a Christmas Day to come. Thankye, John, thankye. Wears well, doesn't he? Surprising. Let me see, seventy-eight I should say, my wife knows though—eighty-two! no, no, not so much—when they get to that time of life they always put on a year or two—no,

seventy-eight is as old as he is, if he's that—(young lady) Yes—nice old man, I'm so fond of old people.

Oh, here comes the pudding, all ablaze with blue-fire (sensation among the juvenile members of the party, exhibited chiefly in a desire to get a piece with some flame on it). Capital—done to a turn—never ate a better, and never wish to—something like a Christmas dinner this, eh? Ah! I believe you—well, just a thimbleful to take off the richness. My poor father's plan, a spoonful of brandy after plum-pudding, always took it himself. Indeed, well I'll try it—assists digestion does it? Ah, I shouldn't wonder. "For what we have received, &c." Host rises—a few words—great pleasure I'm sure—couldn't be more so—see so many of our friends at our—er—er—annual meeting, I mean assemblage at our—er—annual—er—er—gathering—old customs should be kept up, and when I see so many of our friends—er—er—so many of our friends—er—er (desperately)—and relatives round our table, I mean board, round our board, our festive board, I feel—er—er—I feel, I say, I cannot but feel (coughs protractedly)—(hear, hear)—hearty man raps the table vigorously with a pair of nut-crackers—(hear, hear)—when I say I meet so many I cannot say, I mean, I say, I feel—(hear, hear)—I feel, I say, grateful and thankful that—er—er—we have been spared to meet again on a similar occasion—(hear, hear)—hearty man works away with the nutcrackers—hostess thinks how he must be spoiling the mahogany—Christmas is a season of the year when as I have said we should all—er—er—(can't think of any thing but "meet together," and is aware that he has already made use of that expression several times) when

we should all—er—er—unite, yes, unite, when we should all unite in fostering, in promoting—er—harmony—er—and kind feeling—and kind feeling—er—(hear, hear)—one towards the other—(hear, hear)—and, therefore, when I see around me—when I behold so many kind friends and neighbours, I feel that, that, I feel how much, that is, I feel that (becomes hopelessly lost, resolves to conclude as quickly as he can), I mean that, I am very much obliged to you all for coming here to-day, that we both are, and that we join in the good wishes of the season, and wish you all a merry Christmas and a happy New Year, when it comes—(hear, hear, hear, hear). Sits down. Instant relief of company, who, with the exception of the hearty man, have been inspecting the pattern of their dessert plates with great appearance of interest during the speech of host. Buzz of conversation—flow of small talk. Ingenious young gentlemen transform that useful fruit, the orange, into a variety of elegant shapes for the especial delectation of the fair sex. Oh—scream from young lady—first cracker—what's the motto?

> "If Cupid did but tell me true,
> He'd say I should make love to you."

Ha, ha, ha!—not bad. Crack, crack, crack—file-firing all round the table, boys and girls, and grown-up people pulling crackers like fun. Oh, here come the little ones (influx of children for dessert). Oh you darling—will you give me a kiss?—Example contagious—all the young ladies kissing all the little children—young men delirious at the sight—Now what will you take, my dear?—may she, mamma? Well, just a sip, to drink gran'ma and gran'pa's good health

—this *is* a Christmas, isn't it grandpapa?—grandmamma says it reminds her of old times—grandpapa heaves a sigh for the past—affects to be gay—touches his hair—snow on the roof—ha, ha, ha!—what spirits the old gentleman has—grandmamma wipes her spectacles and sniffs—grandpapa relapses and blows his nose—risk that conversation will take a melancholy turn—hearty man to the rescue—riddle, just made it myself (nobody believes *that*). "What flowers bloom most freely in the winter?"—Give it up? "Noses, which are generally to be found then in *full blow*." Ha, ha, ha! (laughs himself) not bad, eh?—mild youth to young lady, "grogblossom, I suppose,"—she smiles faintly, suspecting a joke, but not having the remotest notion of what it is—collapse of mild youth, who being conceited, as most mild youths are, becomes disconcerted, wishes he had said nothing, thinks every one is thinking how stupid he is—no one troubles his head about him.

Telegraphic communication between hostess and matrons in immediate neighbourhood,—ladies rise—rustle bustle—not going to leave us—what a pity we don't introduce continental customs—Oh, yes, perfectly miserable until you send for us. No, go into the drawing-room with the ladies, there's a good lad, we shall be busy here,—only in the way, you know. There—all the gentlemen draw a long breath—Host pokes the fire cheerfully—turn round—push the table back, mind the lamp—form a half circle—that's more comfortable. Don't drink that stuff, I'll give you some of my forty-sevens.—It is of no use putting good wine before ladies,—like throwing pearls you know,—exactly—(distinguished port wine connoisseur) I always give my folks port at twenty-eight shillings a dozen.

—No!—Do indeed, it's the same I buy for the poor people; they don't know that, but its the very same. What a capital plan, ha, ha, ha—do they like it? Think it first rate; it's fruity and sweet you know, with plenty of body, and that's all they care for. Capital, don't take much of it yourself, I'll swear. Never touch a drop—no, I'm drinking fifty-ones now, and very good wine it is for every-day work, but forty-sevens is what I call my wine. Well, try this,—how do you like it? Oh, a good wine, a very good wine, but it wants drinking, it's going off. Think so? Not a doubt of it; what a difference there is in forty-sevens? There is. Cellar has a good deal to do with that, I fancy. Well, of course it has some, but in my opinion the wine has been left too long in the wood in many cases. You are right, that's it; nothing spoils wine so much—stands with you I think; fresh glasses, and try this bottle of thirty-fours—what a wine thirty-fours is!—look at that now, how it keeps its colour—not much of that wine in the country, all in private hands. Oh yes, no use to wine merchants, wouldn't bear moving. Oh dear no, never recover itself. Well, now you mention it, I believe I have one bottle left of that very old wine (there is always one bottle left however old the wine may be), I'll see if I can find one bottle.—(Exit Sir John, or the Squire, as the case may be, no butler ever allowed to bring up that wine—triumphant return, bottle in hand)—the very last I do believe—look at that, sir, a mass of cobwebs—there's a cork for you (cork handed round for inspection; every one assumes a knowing look as it passes through his hands)—Ah! that is a cork, and no mistake—no possibility of contradicting that assertion: warm the decanter Thomas, and steady, mind, steady. Now, sir (to

distinguished connoisseur). Distinguished connoisseur, with an air of preternatural solemnity, holds the glass up to the light, looks through it with his left eye—Wonderful!—looks through it with his right eye—Astonishing!—squints through it with both eyes—Extraordinary!—snuffs up the savour—What a bouquet!—takes a mouthful, looks first as if he were about to whistle, secondly, as if he were about to play on the flute, rolls the precious juice over his tongue—swallows it with a gulp—breathless silence. Verdict, MAGNIFICENT! fifty years in bottle too. Every one concurs, magnificent; no one would think of differing from distinguished connoisseur, so all smack their lips, making believe to like it, thinking it little better than vinegar the while—real tawny port this (in Christmas tales, no worm ever gnaweth at the cork, no critic ever suggests that the wine is past its prime, should have been drunk ten years ago, &c. &c.). 'Cousin John, this is remarkably fine wine;' thus poor relation, who thinks it a good opportunity of declaring to the company the degree of kinship in which he stands to the host, and of intimating that he has been in better circumstances, and that his daily liquor was not always beer of the smallest.—'Glad you like it, my good fellow,' (a thought patronizingly, perhaps, but that may be manner,) 'it *is* fine wine, I agree with you.'—Poor relation in high feather—relates an anecdote, to which no one pays the smallest attention, of his father and the late Duke of York. How my poor father, sir, used to dine frequently with the duke—on very intimate terms indeed; and how the duke gave such bad wine, my father, a first-rate judge of wine, couldn't drink it, positively couldn't drink it, sir; and how the duke said to him one day, before several princes of the

blood and many of the highest nobility, 'Smithers, I don't know how it is, but I can't give my friends such wine as you do;' and he couldn't, it's a fact,—capital cellar my poor father kept, capital!

(A quiet peep at the ladies.) Put off!—You don't say so —well that's what I have heard certainly.—Oh, do tell us all about it.—I should not like to be positive on the point, you know.—Oh, sure to be true.—I heard it from very good authority, but I am not acquainted with all the particulars.—Never mind—do just as well—let us know all about it.—Well, it is reported that it was her parents' doing, but I should say it was much more likely to be his mother.—So should I—not a doubt of it.—At all events the marriage has been indefinitely postponed, and we all know what *that* means.—Oh, of course.—They say she feels it dreadfully.—Poor thing.—Though there's no doubt that with his prospects he could do very much better.—(Chorus of eligible girls) Oh, much better.—Poor thing.—It was fixed, you know, for next Wednesday, and I hear he had made her some beautiful presents, and had given the bridesmaids most elegant rings, and brooches, emeralds, and brilliants, and they will all have to be returned.—What a pity.—For my own part I must say I was surprised when I heard of the match.—So was I immensely.—And I always said, do you know, that something of the sort would be certain to happen. I felt convinced from the very first it would come to nothing. —Although we must all admit that she is a dear creature, there is no doubt that he was throwing himself away. —Oh completely.—Poor thing.—Not that she was a girl I could ever get on with.—No, nor I—there was always

a something.—Yes, there was—there was a kind of reserve about her I never could understand.—Yes, poor dear, she never appeared to take the slightest interest in what girls generally care about.—No, she never came out well in society.—She would make a sweet clergyman's wife, now.—Yes, wouldn't she? just the very thing for her—to go among the poor people—exactly fitted for that.—Never have done for him, no style about her,—not an atom; what ever could have been the attraction I can't possibly imagine. Oh, my dear, there's no accounting for men's taste. (Hostess) Sorry to interrupt you, but the young people are thinking of getting up a little dance, so the servants will be obliged to move the things away. Oh won't that be nice. Delightful, dear.

(The dining-room again). Do you know my fifty-eights are ripening fast—nonsense, can't be fit yet—no not fit, but coming on I assure you—well, I shouldn't have thought it—I like a glass or perhaps two about eleven o'clock in the day with a biscuit—oh yes, I dare say in that way, one could drink fifty-eight wine now. Talking of new port, they tell me sixty-threes is the coming wine. Yes, you are right there—I had in a pipe the other day. Poor relation wishes to know now whether that's the kind of wine you would recommend a man to lay in a stock of. By all means, sir—couldn't do better—and see it bottled yourself. Poor relation says he certainly will see it bottled himself. Then, sir, take my word for it, you'll never repent it. Coffee! Bless me how quickly the time passes when one is talking upon interesting subjects—have a glass of sherry to finish up with. Well, just half a glass. Tea ready in the drawing-room? What do you say, shall we join the ladies? Well, I suppose we must. Young

men take advantage of the opportunity to rise at once. They have been bored by the conversation. Wine all very well in its way, you know, but one may have too much of a good thing—one may. They have tried, it is true, to start a few topics on their own account—they have severally declared half a dozen times apiece their wish that this confounded frost would go, and that we might have a little open weather —they have related wonderful feats performed by wonderfully clever animals, up to any weight, and equal to going over any thing, if you would only give them their head, but the vinous verbosity of their elders has thrown a damp over their spirits, so that it is with a feeling of relief they hail the advent of coffee.

The drawing-room—chairs and tables cleared away—(elderly gentlemen with dismay) What, are they going to dance? (Young gentlemen with delight) A dance, by Jove. (Host aside) Two card-tables in the library—old gentlemen brighten up—(Hostess to good dancer) Now I depend upon you. Where's the music, who'll play? (Beautiful being who knows she will not be permitted to do so, but thinks it will look amiable and self-sacrificing to offer) Oh, I will. No indeed you shall not. Let me. Young ladies squabble elegantly, as to who shall play—matron intervenes and seats herself on the music-stool, to their great relief. Quadrille—wish I had thought of bringing white gloves. Oh never mind —family party, you know. Yes, the decorations are really beautiful—most artistic—May I have the pleasure—What is it, a Waltz? Oh, I don't like a Polka at all—they say it's coming into fashion again—really—my fan if you please—on the mantelpiece, thank you—Galop—dear me, how warm the

room is becoming! Yes, isn't it? What do you say, shall we go and see how the card-players are getting on? By all means. Double, treble, and the rub, seven points. What are we playing? oh, shilling points, half-a-crown on the rubber, just something to give an interest to the game—exactly. Hearts again—silence of the tomb—odd trick and two by honours. Why the doose did you play the ace third hand instead of the queen? Completely cut up—you should have led trumps. Didn't you know the four was the best card? How do we stand? Not very interesting to people who look on, is it? Waltz—Lancers—Galop—Quadrille—Oh you wicked creature—standing under the mistletoe, was I? Well, I'm sure—it will be such fun, won't it? Oh do, there's a darling—don't be ridiculous—but my love—well there, then—look at that horrid boy staring at us. My dear, it is getting very late—come girls—I thought you were at cards, papa—finished long ago, where's Sir John, we must be off directly. Yes, my carriage if you please—going! no, no, no, nonsense—we havn't had Sir Roger yet—now, gran'ma, you really must—oh my eye, ain't these custards jolly—tum-ti-tum-ti-tiddidy—a good swing round in the middle—a fine old English gentleman, isn't he? A drop of something warm to keep the cold out before you go—Henry, my boy, I leave that to you, University men know what's good—now, Mary, where are those eggs?—'a done, Master Henry; I'll tell, that I will, 'a done I say—there, you must drink it while it's hot—oh! this is egg-flip is it? (young ladies taste, burn their mouths, say it is very nice, and think it very nasty)—yes, I thought you would like it—have some more—no, thanks, I'll take a little mulled wine—well, wrap yourselves up warm whatever you

do—beautiful moonlight night, freezing hard though—ta. ta. Lock the door, Thomas, and put out the lights in the dining-room—thank goodness that's over—went off very well, didn't it? oh capitally—good night, I'm so sleepy.

There, that's what I call Christmas-tale Christmas, with the addition in most cases of truant sons returning repentant, just in time for a prime cut off the sirloin, and crusty old gentlemen who have been supposed to be curmudgeons all their lives turning out perfect founts of benevolence, bent upon reconciling every body to every body else, and given to placing thousand-pound notes under dessert plates.

Now I can't call this sort of Christmas true to nature, simply because I have never experienced any thing of the kind except in books. Even the weather generally is most disappointing. I can't remember a really old-fashioned Christmas with plenty of frost and snow, and it is impossible to be enthusiastic about the season on a mild April day, with a drizzling rain, and primroses to be found in every hedge; and as for social gatherings, they are all very well to read about, but impracticable in the country, with bad roads and people living ten or a dozen miles off, not to mention that we have always lots to do at home with poor people at this season of the year. No, our Christmas is of a most prosaic kind. Papa, for instance, is at this period immersed in coals, as he has the management of the fund for supplying the poor with that much-coveted article at a cheap rate; and mamma, assisted by us, superintends the transactions of the clothing-club, allotting blankets to one person, sheets to another, boots and shoes to a third, flannel petticoats to a fourth, and so on. We endeavour to satisfy every body, but have never

been able to succeed yet, for although we allow each depositor to state what article she would wish to have before we make our purchases, we invariably find, when all has been finally arranged, that there are a few discontented individuals who desire to have something different, and think their neighbours have been better served than they, and go away grumbling because we cannot transform a pair of strong boots into a pair of sheets, or *vice versâ*.

Mamma, besides managing the clothing-club, has a great deal to do in superintending such culinary operations as the making of plum-puddings and mince-meat, for we have a regular set of poor people who have their dinner at the rectory on Christmas-day, so that we have to make a large quantity of those eatables. We do not interfere much (I mean myself and sisters), but on Christmas-eve, when what we call our pudding, that is the one we are to have for dinner ourselves, is mixed ready to be put in the pot, we each of us throw a little something into it, a few plums or a little spice, and give it a good stir round, just to say that we have all had a hand in making it.

Besides the poor people who come to dinner, we have a continued succession from morning till night of carol-singers, for whom we provide a stock of fourpenny-pieces, a large cake, and two or three bottles of what our grocer calls "fine old ginger wine." We prefer giving the children ginger wine to sherry or port, because a little goes a great way, for none of them can take much without a violent fit of coughing, while the ginger renders it very warming and agreeable on a cold day, and gives an appearance of strength and body to a really innoxious beverage.

So you see our Christmas is spent in a very quiet and useful manner. Sometimes we have a few friends on New-Year's day, and if there are young people among them we get up a dance, or play at round games, proverbs, &c. Such being the case, I am almost sorry I began an essay on the present subject, for I find I have so much less to say about it than I expected, and what is more, I shall have to conclude rather abruptly, as Mr. Alban has been fidgetting in the drawing-room ever so long waiting for me. I don't know whether he wants me to compare souls, or to go up with him to the church and help in the decorations; however, whichever it should be, I must make haste and get ready for him, and finish by wishing my readers a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

DANCING

I MENTIONED in "CHRISTMAS-TIDE" that I expected to enjoy myself in a quiet way this winter, and so I have, for we have been to a great many parties of one sort or the other, chiefly dances however, and to one really very grand ball, private, but still there were more than eighty persons present I should think, and in this part of the world we consider that a large number.

Katey and I went (of course with mamma), and poor Helen was obliged to stay at home. I pitied her immensely, but then you know, as dear mamma said, it would never do for all three of us to go out together, it would look so pointed. So you see it couldn't be helped; and after all, I dare say she enjoyed herself very nearly as much, playing back-gammon with papa, who promised to keep awake, if he possibly could, on purpose.

Now I dare say you are all anxiety to know how we were dressed. Well, I was in an agony for nearly a week before, thinking how I should go, whether I should wear a most beautiful fancy dress I had for a ball in the summer, or an ordinary low white spotted grenadine, trimmed with ruches and rosettes, edged with green, and wreath to match. At last

I decided in favour of the former; for although it was not to be a fancy ball, I thought there could be no harm in wearing what after all was not by any means singular, and was decidedly striking, as I am sure you will say when I give you a description of it. Imagine then a maid of honour *temp.* Elizabeth (and every body said I looked exactly like one), attired in the most lovely and the richest blue satin tunic possible—*light blue* (you ought to feel very much complimented)—sloping from the waist into a gorgeous train, and displaying a most elegant white satin skirt! The body semi-low, (and this was the annoying part of it, but in those days I suppose they were not sufficiently civilized to wear quite low dresses,) square neck, puffed sleeves, close at the wrist, the whole trimmed with the most delicate edging of swans-down you ever saw, and to crown all, a most piquant head-dress of pearls, *à la* Marie Stuart. I can assure you the costume was universally admired; and although it is not the thing for gentlemen to make remarks to ladies about their dresses, yet in this instance I think it was quite allowable for them to tell me, as many did, that mine was most becoming. The long train was rather inconvenient, certainly, and I heard some ill-natured old maids say, they supposed it was set to catch a spark, or that it was ready laid for a match, with other absurd remarks, of which I saw neither the wit nor the point. I only know they would have been very glad to have been in my shoes (white satin), for all their satirical observations. I managed it (the train) pretty well till we came to the Lancers, which we danced in two sets of sixteen, of course in the greatest confusion in the last figure; for although it seems to me to be the simplest thing in the world,

there are always one or two stupid people who appear unable to tell the difference between an outside ring and an inside ring. But that is not what I was going to say. You know the third figure, where all the gentlemen join hands and dance round the ladies, and *vice versâ;* a figure by-the-by, which always puts me in mind of an old picture in the *Penny Magazine*, representing the war dance of the Feejee Islanders: well, you can fancy my horror at knowing that every one of the eight gentlemen passed backwards and forwards no less than eight times apiece over my train, which I was powerless to remove. I was certain what it would be, and when the dance was over, sure enough there it was, *gone at the gathers*. Fortunately a little pinning-up soon set me right again, and as I was more careful for the rest of the evening, no further mishap occurred.

Katey and I have often compared notes as to the different styles of dancing which gentlemen adopt; and as on the evening in question we both danced every dance, we had a good opportunity of making observations on that point, and we agreed that one's partners might as a rule be placed in three classes, under the following heads, namely, the 'go-ahead,' the 'teetotum,' and the 'wobbler.' The go-ahead is all for pace, and rushes round the room in a series of bounding steps too often utterly regardless of other couples. Sometimes the go-ahead partner has a good ear, and knows how to make his way without coming into collision with any one, even in a crowded room. When this is the case he is by no means an unpleasant dancer, as he whirls you along without any effort on your part, and while he tires himself, leaves you as fresh at the conclusion as you were at the commence-

ment. When however he does make a false step, or a miscalculation as to distance, one is pretty certain, as you say in your University slang, to go a 'howler,' or come to utter grief. But no misadventure of this kind ever seems to abash the go-ahead partner. No sooner have you recovered from the shock of a terrific collision than he is for starting off again in the same reckless manner, and your only consolation consists in hoping that at the pace he is going he is more likely to knock other people down than to be knocked down himself.

The teetotum is a complete opposite to the last named, for I am convinced that a first-rate dancer of this class could execute the fastest galop on a space no larger than that occupied by an ordinary drawing-room table. The teetotum is always tall and generally dances very well, and his grand principles are to rotate upon his own axis as quickly as possible, and to keep out of other people's way. To this end he never scampers along round the room with the general ruck of dancers; and if he does join them, it is only for a moment or two, or to thread dexterously between the couples. As a rule he prefers the centre of the room, where he and a few others of the same class perform a variety of manœuvres, without ever coming into contact with one another. The only objection I have to a teetotum partner is, that he frequently omits the galopade across the room at the beginning of a dance. Now I miss this, for with a partner who trots you out well one often makes a fine show at such a time; besides, I think you get into your paces better after a preliminary galop. The teetotum starts in the quietest manner possible, and you find yourself, insensibly as it were, revolving before you are aware that he intends to begin.

With this class of partner you ought to take a number of quick and short steps, and to dance evenly as he does, or you will infallibly put him out. You require also to have a pretty good head before you engage yourself to a teetotum, otherwise the continual rotation on your own axis, combined with the revolution round another axis situated somewhere between you and your partner, and that in a limited space, will be almost certain to turn you giddy.

As the teetotum partner has been so named by me because he revolves with the ease and steadiness of a well-known toy when at full spin, so may the actions of the wobbler, or uncertain partner, be said to resemble in a general way the struggles and irregular gyrations exhibited by that same toy when on its last legs (or more correctly speaking, when on its last leg). The wobbler is, to use an expressive but slang word, a 'caution;' for although, from the outbursts of recklessness which occasionally possess him, an unpractised eye might be inclined to class him with the go-ahead dancer, his feebleness of purpose and want of dash emphatically demand that he should be placed in a class by himself, the third class.

To begin with, the wobbler holds you in a loose and weak manner, so that you feel his hand slipping from your waist as you proceed. Now if there is one thing more necessary than another, to my thinking, it is that one's partner should hold one firmly, tight in fact, the tighter the better, so that both may move in unison. Then having no ear for music, the wobbler almost invariably makes a false start, gets out of time, and has to stop before he has been half way round, or else persists in dragging you along, an unwilling victim, to no time or tune at all. As for making his way in a crowded

ball-room—what you would call steering, I suppose—he has no notion of what such a thing means ; yet he will frequently make grand preparations to start when the coast is clear, as often miss his opportunity, keep you jigging up and down in one corner of the room to be ready when the next opportunity presents itself, and when it does, and after several unavailing attempts he finally gets off, the chances are that he will be bumped by a go-ahead before he is well under weigh. The wobbler is far too anxiously engaged in maintaining his balance to keep up any thing like a connected conversation during a dance ; and should he tread upon your toes—an occurrence by-the-by that happens on an average once in every round—it is quite an effort for him to gasp out, "I beg your pardon ;" indeed it is ten to one that he will get out of step in making the observation. Sometimes a wobbler is aware of his deficiencies, (in a general way members of this class pride themselves upon dancing well !) in which case he will ingeniously endeavour to hide them by hinting that you are tired, when indeed you are not, and that you would like to rest a little, or that you find the room oppressively hot ; or he will disparagingly remark that the place is far too crowded for real enjoyment, and that you should have been at the Hunt-ball the week before last in the Assembly Rooms ; and after keeping you standing still for the greater part of the dance, he will at last suggest that perhaps you would like to take another turn round (as if you and he had been dancing like mad all the while), and before you are fairly off the band stops playing, and you look as foolish as you well can.

I am aware that my remarks upon this last class of dancers may seem unnecessarily severe ; but if you only knew how

many yards of grenadine, tulle, and tarlatan I have sacrificed to wobblers, and how many fans have been broken to perfect atoms by them, you would understand my feelings on the subject. It is all very fine to say that such dancers are well-intentioned and good-natured. Are good intentions efficient substitutes for weak legs, I should like to know? and are irresolution and utter feebleness of purpose counterbalanced by sweetness of disposition? No girl likes to be made an exhibition of in a ball-room, especially when, as often happens, the defects of her partner result in a great measure from his never having learnt to dance properly. The greatest infliction a tall girl can endure is to have to dance a round dance with a short wobbler. Her only remedy then, is, either to take him round and make him keep step to her, or to feign giddiness and ask him to lead her to a seat.

I have made such a long digression upon the subject of gentlemen dancers, that I shall have hardly any space left to say much more about the ball. Indeed I scarcely know what else there is to tell, for I am sure no one would feel interested in the usual common-places people talk to one another on such occasions. I wonder how many times, for instance, I was asked whether I had been very gay this winter; how I liked the cold weather, and if I skated (I can just a little, two or three strokes, you know, with one foot, and run along upon the other, and then upon both a little way, just enough to make one look interesting, that's all, and I don't care about any more); and whether I didn't find the ball-room hot, and the hall much cooler (I must have been asked this at least twenty times); and did I like novels (I said I doted upon them), and wasn't the floor nice and springy; and would I

have lemonade or claret-cup; and which would I prefer, fowl and ham, or turkey and tongue, and would I have a little wine, or was I a teetotaller (I had asked for a glass of water, which called forth the last brilliant remark), and wasn't the room nicely decorated, and what a number of doors there seemed to be in the house, and didn't I wonder where they all led to, (this original observation was made by Sir Thomas Topsawyer's eldest son, so of course I said there were a great many, and that I wondered very much where they led to, and I should like to peep into one, so he opened it and discovered a footman and two maid-servants washing wine-glasses, at which he, my partner, was as much disconcerted as it is fashionable for a young man in society to be.)

Poor dear mamma was most anxious about us both, and when she saw me dancing with young Topsawyer, I saw a flush of pride pass over her face, although, as she afterwards said, she was as tired as she well could be; so I pretended to be deeply interested in what he was talking about (something stupid you may be sure, for a greater noodle I never met), and put on all those little airs and graces, which, together with the most attractive smile I could assume and an engaging downcast look (under the eyebrows, you know the sort of thing, it is tremendously killing when used with discretion), ought to have reached the heart of a stone image, but I am afraid had little effect upon him, for he asked me several times whether I wouldn't like to sit down. *I* did not mind, only I knew mamma would be angry if I did not seem to be making the best use of my opportunity, and get engaged to him for another dance. So I managed it in this way, very cleverly I think. In the first place I kept hanging

on his arm after the dance was over, talking and making play in the manner I have just described, flattering him about his skating, of which I had heard he was proud; and when he asked me whether I wasn't tired, or wouldn't like to sit down, I said, Oh dear no, the hall and corridors were so delightfully cool, and I was so interested in his account of skating, as I was so fond of it myself; and then I gave him my fan to carry, which of course obliged him to keep near me, till at last the band struck up again, whereupon I exclaimed, "Oh that darling Mabel waltz! I do so enjoy it, don't you?" and what could the man do, I should like to know, but dance it with me? Dearest mamma was *so* pleased, and when it was over and he led me up to her quite flushed and warm (just becomingly flushed you know), she would insist upon making room for him on one side of her and me on the other, and flattered him so nicely (he is open to that sort of thing) but yet judiciously, that he almost coloured up. "I saw you enjoying yourselves," said dear mamma. "My daughter does so delight in waltzing, and you dance so admirably (he is a terrible wobbler): you have tired yourself, I fear, my darling (turning to me and patting my cheek with her fan)—she's such a pet, Mr. Topsawyer; I wouldn't have her fatigue herself for the world; you really do go so fast, it made me quite giddy to look at you, but I know I can trust her in your hands," and so on, till the noodle actually asked me to dance again after supper—but dear mamma is such a capital manager.

Poor Katey, I am sorry to say, was in sad disgrace; but certainly it was her own fault, for she danced three times running with young Crackbrain, who writes for newspapers, or

something low, and, as people say, lives upon his wits, which of course must be a very small livelihood for any one. Darling mamma spoke quite severely to her about it, and I pitied her so, you can't think, for she was dreadfully out of spirits all the way home, though mamma and I were quite lively, remarking upon the dresses and things, and picking people to pieces in the most cheerful manner imaginable.

Since the ball we have been comparatively quiet, and I have amused myself by throwing together a few thoughts upon a subject which rises naturally out of the one of which I have been treating—I fear at too great length. What it is I will tell you perhaps in a future essay.

FIRST, CATCH YOUR HUSBAND

THE day after the ball we were very tired, as may be imagined, and did not rise until long after our usual hour. I got up at nine o'clock, and when I looked in the glass, which I always do the first thing, I saw such a perfect fright that I immediately drew down the blinds and went to bed again. However, we were all up by lunch time, and of course began to talk about the previous evening's amusement, and to describe to dear Helen the various kinds of dresses people had on, and how they looked, and who were particular in their attentions; in fact, to converse as all sensible persons do after an affair of the sort.

Dear mamma was in capital spirits, considering the fatigue she had undergone; and soon after we were seated at lunch she turned to me, and with a knowing smile said, "Well, my dear, any execution done last night, do you think?"

I understood what she meant well enough, but was determined to appear not to see it; so I answered, "What an extremely odd expression, mamma! 'execution done last night;' what ever can you mean?"

Mamma knew I was pretending, so she took no notice of my reply, but said: "Well, young Topsawyer certainly did

seem very much smitten, my dear; and you managed him so nicely, my love. I should not be at all surprised if he were to ride over here some fine morning soon."

"Oh, mamma, how can you be so absurd?" I said, and tried to blush; but could not if it was ever so, which annoyed me excessively, as I wished, for the sake of peace and quietness, to make her think there really was something in it, although I was perfectly certain there was not: but mamma is always so pleased when she fancies she sees her way to getting us off suitably, and so vexed and angry with us when nothing comes of a flirtation with an eligible *parti*, that I was desirous of humouring her as much as possible. And notwithstanding that I was hardly up to blushing, after the exertion I had gone through, I did contrive to hesitate a little, and simper in a kind of foolish way, which was nearly if not quite as effective as if I had actually coloured.

Papa, who was at lunch with us, tried to turn the conversation, and told mamma she ought to know better than put such ridiculous notions into the girls' heads (just as if they wouldn't come there naturally), and gave us quite a lecture upon behaving discreetly, of which we made fine fun when he left the room.

However, this conversation was not altogether wanting in results, since it caused me to reflect upon a subject, which in times gone by was held to be of some importance by the young of both sexes; I mean, as you will probably have already guessed, marriage.

Why do young women go to balls? Don't fancy that I am about to talk like a tract, because I am not. I simply ask the question. Most people would at once reply, "To

dance, to be sure." But I answer "No." That is the ostensible reason certainly, and formerly might have been the real one. Young women go to balls in these days just as they go to croquet parties, archery meetings, concerts, church, the opera, and the Crystal Palace, to show themselves, to be exhibited by loving mammas for the inspection of the unmarried of the opposite sex—in plain words, to hunt for husbands.

Now I am not over-fastidious, and I have no personal objection to being publicly exhibited for the abovenamed purpose; still, I think it must be apparent to most people that we are reversing the order of things, and that young men ought to hunt for wives, and not young women for husbands.

The question therefore which I propose to discuss is the following. Whether the marriage state does not offer, in the present condition of society, greater advantages to women than it does to men, since we find it so much sought after by the former, and so little desired by the latter.

Now I intend, in treating of this matter, to regard it in a plain common-sense light, and to lay aside the sentimental notions with which poets and other half-witted persons have surrounded it. Moreover, I purpose, as far as I am able, to abandon that frivolous style of writing into which I have fallen of late, and to round my periods in a manner befitting the gravity of my subject.

In order to bring my brain and mind into proper order for this task, I have for some time given up light literature, and taken to reading leading articles and reviews in newspapers, which previously I have been accustomed to skip. For instance, I have read right through several articles in the

Times on Reform, but I do not think I was much benefited by them, as they were all about the working classes, who, as far as my experience goes, are much better off than we are, for they seem to marry whenever they like upon nothing at all, and to live very comfortably upon it too. Then, a few months ago, you may remember there was a long review in the same paper upon the "Gay Science." I thought by the title that it might be in a certain degree entertaining as well as useful, but I was horribly disappointed, for any thing so dreadfully dry I never read. However, I was determined to go through it, and I have no doubt that it was very clever and deep, for when I had finished it I was quite as ignorant of what the Gay Science was as when I began it. But you shall judge for yourself whether I have derived any advantage with respect to improvement of style, from the course of reading I adopted, for I will without further delay give you my ideas upon the question proposed above.

To begin then. There can be no doubt but that we (marriageable girls) are a drug in the market; that there are no offers, that there is no demand, that we are unchanged at greatly reduced prices, that there is nothing doing, no sales effected. Even the quotations that appear daily in the *Times* are, it is to be feared, too often nominal, and in many cases merely time bargains.

These facts granted, how are we to account for them? The generality of people are ready enough with a reason. They will tell you with a most plausible air that it is all owing to the present system of education for young women. They will urge that in the education young ladies receive now-a-days, too much is sacrificed to mere accomplishments,

which, although to a certain extent valuable to heighten the attractions of beauty and wealth, are commonly utterly neglected when their possessor has effected her object and entrapped a partner; or, when kept up, are comparatively speaking useless.

And thus, these people argue, young men have at last come to perceive that when the accomplishments are laid aside there is nothing to take their place, nothing else having been learnt. Therefore, they go on to say, since accomplishments have failed, let utility be tried in lieu of them; let young women who wish to do their duty by their husbands learn something really useful, how to boil a potato, cook a mutton-chop, or cut out their own baby clothes for instance.

As I have already observed, there is something plausible in this style of argument, a style by the way which is most commonly affected by old bachelors and men of the last generation, who seem to pride themselves very much upon having made the grand discovery that the world is not what it used to be some thirty or forty years ago. At the first blush many would be inclined to fancy that a girl who knew how to boil a potato and cook a mutton-chop would make a more useful wife than one who could play Beethoven's sonatas with all the precision, execution, and brilliancy of an Arabella Goddard; since well-cooked food is a necessary of life, whereas Beethoven's sonatas are not.

Now there is a story told of Sidney Smith (I say Sidney Smith, because it always makes a joke go off better to father it upon some well-known wit) which I think may be suitably inserted in this place. It appears that Sidney Smith was living at one time in very small and inconvenient lodgings;

his bedroom, indeed, was so confined that he had only just space to turn round in. A friend who came to see him wondered how he could possibly sleep in such a small apartment, for, said he, "there isn't room to swing a cat." "I am satisfied with it," replied Sidney Smith, "for you know, after all, I shan't often want to swing a cat."

Just so we may ask what is the use of complaining that young women don't know how to boil potatoes, when they will never be called upon to boil them.

The fact of the matter really is, that people who think and talk in this absurd way never for a moment reflect that however sound their arguments may be with regard to certain classes of individuals, they may be utterly untenable when applied to others. For instance, my remarks upon the subject of marriage are, as coming from a girl who moves in society, naturally addressed to people in society, and I contend that what may be termed the chop and potato theory does not hold good of wives in society, although it may of wives of people of whom nobody who is anybody takes notice. Poor wretches who marry upon a paltry pittance of eight hundred or a thousand pounds a year may well wish for homely wives, because they cannot afford to move in a sphere in which brilliant accomplishments, or, when these are laid aside, elegant and *distingué* frivolities, are appreciated. But in society, where a girl who marries ten thousand a year is not thought to have done credit to her bringing up, the case is widely different. Men among us, men that is to say of wealth, family, and fashion, require wives that they can show off, in plain language they need ornaments. Butlers, cooks, stewards, and housekeepers manage their household

affairs, while nurses and dressmakers very much lessen the trouble of incumbrances. It is, therefore, I think, pretty plain that for all the ordinary purposes of married life the education of a fashionable girl is sufficiently suitable. Nor is this education of so superficial a character as is generally supposed. Take my own case. I am, as I pointed out in my Introductory remarks, well up in geography, modern languages, and arithmetic, and have besides a fair knowledge of history. Of course it would never do for a girl to know as much about such things as a governess, or any person of that stamp; therefore, with the exception of a few of the more important details, I think a girl's knowledge upon these subjects should consist for the most part of certain general ideas. For instance, in English history, I know that people eat goose on Michaelmas-day, because Queen Elizabeth was dining off that bird when the news reached her of the defeat of the Spanish Armada. Well, that is what I call one of those important details with which every girl should become acquainted; whereas, when we turn to occurrences of a different nature, such as the Reformation, it is quite sufficient for one to know that Henry the Eighth, and Cardinal Wolsey, and the Pope, and Ann Boleyn, and Queen Catherine, and Luther, had something to do with it, and that without them it would perhaps never have happened at all. I say it is quite sufficient for one to have some general idea of such a subject as this, because if one knew more, it would appear as if one learnt history for the sake of knowing something about it, which would be thought, and naturally enough, absurd; for what does one want with history after one is married? Now this part of her education is what a girl

receives either at home under a governess, or at a boarding-school, and answers to the public-school education of boys, and the reading and writing of the lower orders. It is commonly completed, or nearly so, by the time she is fourteen or fifteen years old, and has for its chief object the strengthening and exercising of the mental faculties, so that in after life a girl may be able to get on in the world, and not at the outset of her career be placed at a disadvantage with respect to her compeers, as would inevitably be the case were those faculties allowed to lie dormant in her childhood.

The preliminary mental training undergone in youth is really the most important part of every body's education, for even men who become great scholars and philosophers, without this early training, would never be able to get on at all in the ordinary affairs of life, notwithstanding their cleverness; and women without it could neither proceed to the next step in their education—a step which I shall presently describe—nor be fitted for the ordinary duties of married life, such as making and receiving morning calls, presiding at dinner parties, and so forth. Indeed, the system of education thus early undergone, is that which produces the most permanent effects; and I have known many married ladies who, notwithstanding that they had forgotten most of their accomplishments, could still go through the multiplication-table if they began at the beginning, and some few (but these were certainly extreme cases) who could bear being dodged in it.

I think I have thus clearly shown that the preliminary education of a fashionable girl is, considered as a groundwork, eminently suited for one who is about to enter the

marriage state. If therefore I can as clearly demonstrate that the after education of such a girl, the finishing, as it is sometimes vulgarly called, is actually undergone for the express purpose of enabling a girl to acquire a husband, then I shall have fairly proved that the present depressed state of the matrimonial market is not to be attributed to a faulty or defective system of education.

When a girl gets to be about fifteen years old, she begins to neglect most of her former studies, to throw aside her grammar, verbs, geography and so forth, and to look upon her governess as a "tiresome old thing," and the schoolroom as a place which it is quite beneath her dignity to enter, except when she has to take her music lesson, or practise her scales. She looks forward with eagerness to the time when she shall come out, and feels a degree of innocent curiosity about the external world of fashionable dissipation, from which she has hitherto kept aloof.

When these symptoms exhibit themselves, an ambitious and affectionate mother forthwith proceeds to change the whole plan of her daughter's education. She allows her more freedom; the girl takes her place in the drawing-room after a dinner-party, or when there is company; she joins in the social croquet gatherings at home, and is even allowed, by way of getting her hand in, to carry on an incipient flirtation with a cousin or some harmless but presentable youth. She goes up with the family to town, where she is introduced to a West-End dressmaker, to be more or less disfigured according to the taste of the *artiste* and the fashion of the hour. She is taught music, singing, and drawing, by the best known, and consequently the most expensive, masters; and

when she returns to the family seat, a finishing governess, a very superior person indeed, sees that she does not neglect these accomplishments; and in addition endeavours to impart to her manners, bearing, and conversation, an air of grace, composure, and *ton*, which it is absolutely necessary she should acquire before she can be considered fit to emerge into the world of fashion. This done, she comes out, say at the county ball, and is henceforth let loose upon society, with instructions, tacit but understood, that being now well versed in the gentle art, she is expected to angle for, hook, play with, land, and if she or mamma should think fit, throw in again, a male of her species.

From this period her education is left very much in her own hands, and as she has always one object in view, namely the capture of a husband, she varies it according to the fashion and taste of the times. Do men of position and wealth seem to approve of fast girls? she becomes fast and talks slang. Do they, on the contrary, profess a liking for a girl who has "something in her, you know?" she attends lectures on Science made easy, and talks of learning Latin.

I can just remember, a few years ago, what a stir there was when some benefactor of the human race having coined a pleasing euphemism, all the female world ran mad in pork-pie hats, after "pretty horsebreakers." Slang words and expressions were then all the 'go,' and had Mr. Hotten's Dictionary of slang been published at that time, I have no doubt that it would have had an enormous sale as a birthday present to young ladies from their affectionate mammas.

A short time afterwards an impression arose that the education of girls should not differ so much as it then

did from that of boys; that it would do girls all the good in the world, as the phrase goes, if they were generally instructed in the rudiments of Latin, and some bold men even ventured to add Greek. Many girls, anxious to anticipate the opinion which they supposed most men would hold upon the question, actually began to learn Latin; and I know one who attributes her engagement and subsequent marriage with the heir presumptive to a peerage, entirely to the fact that at a dinner-party, when he was hesitating over a quotation from Horace, not being able to remember it correctly, she, to use her own phrase, quietly tipped him the right words, although they were said as a compliment to her, something about a girl of the name of Lalage, I know, because he always speaks of her as his Lalage in consequence. But this was an exception, and I never heard of another case. The dodge of learning Latin was a false move entirely on the part of the girls who attempted to put it in practice. Most of them are old maids to this day, and the rest married badly, not one more than five thousand a year. The idea was started by some stupid old professor or other, who of course had no knowledge of life, and I must say the girls were very much to blame for falling in with it so hastily. A moment's reflection would have convinced them that it could never have originated in society, where, as I have shown in a previous essay, all eligible *partis* are unanimous in condemning too much learning in a girl. A great many men too are fond of making a show of a little Latin, especially dull stupid men; they think they can thus with comparatively little trouble impose upon the credulous, by making their dulness and stupidity look as much like wisdom and pro-

fundity as possible. These men of course would regard with horror the idea of ladies learning Latin and Greek; for once married, their mask would be raised and their folly revealed.

I have already said that when once girls have come out they are left very much to their own resources, and allowed to adopt any plan which they may deem expedient for the furtherance of the grand object they have in view; and, as I shall presently show, it is so much to their own interest to use every exertion in order to succeed, that as a rule they may safely be left to work by themselves. It will, however, sometimes happen that an eccentric, wilful girl will refuse to put her whole soul into her occupation, and will even exhibit a disinclination to adopt those schemes and plans for conquest which experienced matrimonial brokers have ascertained from long practice to be infallible in their operation. Then it is that the influence of an affectionate mother may be brought to bear, with oftentimes the best effect, upon the refractory maiden. By a judicious mixture of flattery, cajolery, and threats, a mamma who has her daughter's happiness at heart will either force an unwilling bride to the altar, or, at the very least, be enabled to rouse a girl who shows an inclination to flag in the pursuit of a husband, and induce her to recommence the chase with redoubled zest.

Looking back then to the question at issue, we find that not only does a fashionable girl receive a preliminary education of a sufficiently solid and useful nature for one in her position in life, but also that she is in addition specially trained, when at a most susceptible age, for the great race for wealth and position, a race by-the-by which all her well-wishers desire may end in a tie. It is plain, therefore, that if,

as is undoubtedly the case, the shares in the old-established firm of Cupid, Mammon, and Co. (limited), (the first-named gentleman has now retired from the active business of the concern, but still retains a portion of his interest in it as sleeping partner,) are quoted at very much below par, the system of education in vogue among the shareholders has nothing to do with their depreciation.

Having fairly proved this in the preceding pages, I now proceed to consider the question proposed in the first part of this article, namely, whether the marriage state does not offer in the present condition of society, greater advantages to women than it does to men, since we find it so much sought after by the former, and so little desired by the latter; for I consider that my answer to this question, which I may at once say will be in the affirmative, will, in my opinion, account for the extraordinary "tightness" in the matrimonial market. Assuming, as I think I am fairly entitled to do, that the object of marriage now-a-days is not what it used to be in the times when men and women married for love, to perpetuate their race, and to be a comfort and support to one another, let me pass in brief review the several inducements which the marriage state offers respectively to men and women.

I will take the sterner sex first. Rich men, men of birth and fashion, are in these days mostly driven into matrimony by the force of circumstances. They marry sometimes for the sake of gaining a certain air of respectability, after having lived a fast life; sometimes in order to retain in one branch of the family a title or an entailed estate; at others, that they may be better able to perform those hospitable and charitable duties which are expected from persons in their position and

of their property. They can generally allege some sensible matter-of-fact reasons for abandoning the freedom of single life and the unrestricted affections, which, if they consulted their own inclinations alone, they would unhesitatingly prefer.

Of course such men never dream of loving their wives; in fact, they are for the most part so *blasé* as to be incapable of feeling so pure an affection as love. Old-established custom, indeed, requires that a certain small amount of friendship should be exhibited, at all events in public, between married people; but beyond bearing his name, and occasionally his children, a wife in society has little in common with her husband, and is, as I hope shortly to show, much freer than when she was unmarried.

On the other hand, poor men, men whose annual incomes are reckoned by hundreds instead of by thousands of pounds, cheerfully accept their position and exaggerate the so-called extravagance of women, in order that they may with a better show of reason plead their poverty as an excuse for preserving the liberty of bachelor life. Even men of good income are made so comfortable in their chambers and at their clubs, that, unless influenced by some such powerful motives as I have enumerated above, they feel disinclined to change their present condition of luxurious ease for the doubtful pleasures and the undoubted anxieties of matrimony. Moreover, most men who are not born to riches are such slaves to business for the first forty or fifty years of their lives, that they have no time to go courting, or if they have the time, have no opportunity of moving in the society of fashionable people, and so meeting with well-bred girls. And when they have at last amassed enormous fortunes, and begin to think when

they are turned of fifty that they are nearly old enough to marry, they find they have become such confirmed old bachelors, that it would be perfect misery to them to be obliged to leave off their peculiar habits, to drop their old cronies, and to enter almost as it were upon a new state of existence. So they take Punch's advice, and don't marry at all.

Thus it will be seen that the inducements held out to men to enter into the holy bonds of matrimony are, except in rare instances, few and unimportant. With women, however, the case is very different. Marriage is all in all to them. Not because their warm hearts, their young affections pant for reciprocal emotions in the bosoms of the opposite sex, but because marriage is to them the commencement of a new, free, and unrestrained life. Young women when single are, as I have already pointed out, forced to go through such a round of dissipation and gaiety in the search for husbands, that from very weariness many of the less ambitious would give up the chase altogether, were it not for the stern decrees of mamma, who has no notion of having a parcel of old maid daughters hanging on to her skirts, bringing her dyed hairs in sorrow to the grave, and reflecting discredit upon her generalship in not having sold her goods when they were juicy and fresh. Subjected to continual taunts from their affectionate parents because they have not managed to get themselves 'off,' it is very natural that they should adopt any expedient to become free, and severally accept a hand without a heart for the sake of acquiring establishments of their own, with the position accorded to women who have married well.

A mother, too, who has united her daughters to eligible men, may indeed congratulate herself upon the success which

has attended her efforts. Relieved from the cares of maternity, she, with the assistance of a skilful *artiste*, applies herself to repair the ravages of time on her own person, and presently blossoms with perennial youth. Her frowns relax. Her daughters, whom she formerly upbraided in harsh and unfeeling terms, she now treats with deference and respect: she has a conscious pride in talking of their position in society, the wealth of their husbands, and the like. Moreover, if her daughters have married above them, as they will have done under her good management, her circle of acquaintance is enlarged, she herself rises in the social scale, and has real claims upon the attentions of the world.

And to the girls themselves, what a change for the better! Possessed of wealth and position, what can a young woman want? Horses and carriages await her orders, a crowd of menials do her bidding, she spends the season in town, the winter at her country seats, and the autumn in a continental trip, or a cruise in the Mediterranean, while, above all, she has the freedom of married life without that serious drawback, the obtrusive love of a husband. Married for money, she has all that money can procure, while her affections, entirely disengaged, are free to roam wherever they please. Old lovers and new ones hover about her like wasps round a honey-pot. They will give her plenty of love, and her husband will give her plenty of money. It has been urged that husbands object to their wives having lovers. They used to do so, it is true; but we have changed all that, we have taken a leaf out of our neighbours' book, and society rather requires than not that a young married woman, with any pretensions to *ton*, should have a lot of young men dangling after her.

A married woman of the present day therefore is far freer than an unmarried woman. The one has every luxury that wealth can furnish, and can flirt to her heart's content with young men, regardless of whether they are rich or poor; the other, depending almost for her future existence upon making a good match, is unable to carry a flirtation to any length until mamma has decided upon the eligibility of the *parti*, and looks forward with feverish anxiety to the time when, having gleefully hooked some *blasé* man of wealth and position, she has at length attained to the haven where she would be.

Consequently, the marriage state affording, as I have shown, so many greater advantages to women than it does to men, the natural result follows, viz., that the supply of would-be wives is much greater than the demand for them, hence the slowness with which sales are effected, and the difficulty of striking a bargain.

Having discovered the source of the evil, now for the remedy, which, if my proposals are carried out, will be sharp and decisive.

I have heard that among the ancient Greeks men who did not marry after a certain time of life were compelled annually to run the gauntlet between a double row of single girls armed with whips, but I should be averse to a proceeding of so cruel a kind as that. Besides, I do not think I could make up my mind to strike any man very hard if it was ever so.

No. I propose the following simple remedies. That the clubs should be abolished, the whitebait in the river poisoned, and the Star and Garter at Richmond razed to the ground.

I would then form a company to erect blocks of houses fitted with model sets of chambers, and as soon as they were built, pass a law compelling all bachelors to leave their luxurious lodgings in private houses, or their rooms in the Albany, and other places, and take up their abode in the company's houses, which being model houses would of course be supremely uncomfortable ; and in addition I would pass another law forcing all single men possessed of means to marry, to go round with a basket to the butcher, greengrocer, and fishmonger, and choose and provide their own dinner every day. These enactments would, I think, prove sufficient to raise the demand for wives.

Next, in order to produce an appearance of lessening the supply of young women, I would have all single girls take a solemn oath never to marry, and I would advise at least one-third of them to take the veil at once, and place themselves under the superintendence of some well-known ritualistic divines, in the empty club-houses, which might at very little expense be turned into convents.

Then, so soon as the demand for wives had considerably increased, as I am convinced it would in a very short time, a portion of the girls should be absolved from their oath, and exhibited for sale, and when these had been bought another lot put up, and so on until the whole were disposed of.

I am certain my plan would answer, for it is based upon a principle in Political Economy, which I have heard papa's city friends say is a sound one (of course I know nothing of Political Economy, I only speak from hearsay), viz., that the market is cheapest to those who don't want to buy, or, which comes to the same thing, pretend they don't want to buy.

You can see how successfully the principle works in a small way among some of the clergy. High Church curates are always preaching up celibacy and the superior holiness of single life, yet no class of men marry so rapidly as they do. This fact does not lessen, as might be supposed, the force of my remarks concerning the dulness of the demand for wives, because curates, you know, unless well-connected or likely to be bishops, are not looked upon by fashionable girls as Society matrimonially considered.

I may add that I shall be happy at any time to supply further details respecting my proposals for remedying the evils which exist in the present system of procuring husbands, and shall also be ready to come down with a handsome subscription towards building model lodging-houses to make bachelors miserable.

ON BISHOPS

WERE I to speak according to my own private judgment, which of course no girl who has had correct principles instilled into her ought to do, I am afraid I should say that for my own part I do not think much of bishops.

To be sure they stand out above the dead level of the clerical world, and give a finish to clerical society, just as turrets disposed by some skilful architect relieve the sky line of a flat façade, or as stout iron posts, with big knobs, placed at regular intervals, break the uniformity of a line of railings. Still this merely ornamental and picturesque episcopal property cannot be said, in my opinion, to compensate for the absence of practical utility. Even Mr. Alban, who, as a devout High-Churchman, is a staunch upholder of episcopacy, and whose constant dictum is "no bishop, no priest," quite laughed at the idea of our bishops being possessed of any real authority. I remember at the time when we introduced into the parish some of the latest ritualistic fashions, poor papa, who has not the nerve to carry out any great reformation unaided, became very much alarmed, because some stupid old farmers threatened to make a complaint to the bishop of "these here new-fangled notions," as they styled our

improvements, and consulted with Mr. Alban as to the desirability of giving way to them; but Mr. Alban, in his clever manner, said, his motto was that of the Church with which he hoped we should soon be in complete accord, viz. *non possumus* (whatever that may be); so that papa must on no account think of yielding a single point, and that as for the appeal to the bishop, he did not care a straw for it, as the poor old fellow could do no more than give the malcontents fair words, and dismiss them with his blessing, which, as Mr. Alban added, could not do much harm. This conversation naturally introduced the subject of episcopal authority, and I recollect Mr. Alban saying, that the whole spiritual bench appeared as if they had received instructions very similar to those given to the Watch in *Much Ado about Nothing*, and that with regard to ritualism especially, he really believed some Dogberry had given them such a command as this—"If you meet a ritualist, you may suspect him, by virtue of your office, to be no true churchman; and, for such kind of men, the less you meddle or make with them, why, the more is for your orthodoxy." I do not wish you for one moment to suppose that Mr. Alban intended to speak disparagingly of the bishops, for he is far too wise to let slip words which might at any future time be made use of to his own disadvantage,—he merely desired, I am sure, to quiet papa, and show him how unreasonable his fears were. Moreover, as regards myself again, I would bid you notice that I have said nothing against bishops, I have only intimated that were I to exercise my private judgment, I would give such and such an opinion concerning them; but as, for conscientious reasons, I never do exercise my private judgment,

therefore this opinion may, to all intents and purposes, be regarded as never having been expressed.

I should be, indeed, vexed if any one thought I was capable of performing so wicked an action as that of speaking contemptuously of the episcopal bench. Bishops, as we all know, and as no one is more ready to admit than I, are very much looked up to in society. A dean is by no means a bad substitute for a bishop (English, of course), being nearly as rare, and I have known people, for want of a higher dignitary, make a very good show before their friends with an archdeacon, but after all none equal a bishop. There is a something in the rich, oily tones of a bishop's voice, and in the look of his legs, that never fails to rivet one's attention and command one's respect. I do not know whether the fact that many of them have been heads of colleges has any thing to do with this indefinable something, but when we were all in Cambridge, one May term, I noticed a very similar, I won't say pomposity, because we do not call people in society pompous, but—well, dignified condescension in an old friend of papa's, at whose house we dined, and he was the Master of some college.

It is to be regretted that many, too many, of our prelates spring from a very low origin indeed, and I think the Prime Minister, or whoever is the proper person, ought to be more careful in making inquiries about birth and parentage, &c., before he offers a bishopric to any one. However, once promoted to the bench, society, always lenient, forgets the obscurity which may shroud the lineage of the most reverend Doctor, and permits him to impale with the arms of his see some fanciful device invented by an ingenious heraldic engraver.

But to come to the subject of this essay. We know a bishop —I do not mean the bishop of the diocese; of course we are acquainted with him in a general kind of way, that is, we meet him now and then, and he has partaken of lunch at our house at Confirmations. He is a quiet, well-behaved, good-natured old man, but dreadfully slow. Says the same things over and over again every time he comes.—Delightful neighbourhood; picturesque spot; fine old church. You must be very comfortable here. Of course we say we are, very.—Gratifying to find so many young people for confirmation,—very gratifying; nice healthy children, too, one or two girls remarkably good-looking, didn't you think so, Miss Gushington? Must be something in the air of the place conducive to beauty, eh? ha, ha, ha,—and then the old boy chuckles, thinking he has made me such a pretty compliment.

No! our bishop is a personal friend, only Colonial I regret to say, and Colonial bishops, like Colonial port, are very inferior to the European article. Still for all that he is a bishop. We became acquainted with him in this way. He came down to a neighbouring town to hold a missionary meeting in aid of his diocese (Dahomey), and when papa saw a notice of it in the county paper, he mentioned, in a casual kind of way, that when he was a little boy he had been at the same school with the bishop; whereupon dear mamma, who never loses an opportunity, urged him to renew his acquaintance with him, which papa rather reluctantly consented to do. So he attended the meeting, and when it was over introduced himself; and after he had related a great many incidents of their school days to the bishop, in order to bring himself to his recollection, the latter said he had some

faint remembrance of papa, and that he was enchanted, perfectly enchanted, to meet him again. (I do not believe for one moment that he recollected any thing about him, only he was obliged to say he did when papa pressed him so much.) Well, after this, they had a little conversation, and papa invited him to stay a few days at the rectory, and, as being a Colonial bishop, he had of course plenty of spare time on his hands, he accepted the invitation.

I well remember the thrill that ran through my own bosom, and I have reason to believe through the bosom of every other member of the family too, when papa returned and told us that the bishop was coming to stay a week with us. I prepared myself by reading Paley's Evidences, and Butler's Analogy, for it would have been of no use to have practised one's accomplishments, since he was more than middle-aged, and married too. Still I always like to create a favourable impression, especially at first. Well, he came, quite the bishop, shovel hat, apron, and gaiters, and so polite and courteous, we were all delighted with him, and I had no idea until then how nice bishops were. I must confess I was a little shocked next morning, to see him out of my window walking with papa in the garden before breakfast, wearing an old Jim-Crow hat, but as he did not seem to feel that he had placed himself in a false position nobody alluded to the circumstance. It was pleasant summer weather while he was with us, and we were quite at a loss to determine how we should act about croquet, whether we should have our games as usual, leaving him to look on, for none of us suspected that a bishop would condescend to play, or, as that might seem a little discourteous to our visitor, give up our games of

croquet so long as he was with us, and we had agreed to adopt the latter course, when to our utter astonishment he introduced the subject himself, and actually asked me, of all people in the world, to teach him. Consequently, every day we either played amongst ourselves, or invited a few friends to make up a croquet party, and the bishop invariably joined us. He played very badly to be sure, but I could sympathize with him on that point; besides, no one expects a dignitary of the church to be a proficient in such a frivolous game. At first none of us liked to treat him as one usually treats enemies, and send his ball a long way off, for we thought he would scarcely consider himself justified in putting his episcopal legs to the ignoble task of fetching it back again, of course he would never think of running, you know, (I generally skip along under such circumstances, as I think it gives one a light and fairy-like appearance,) so, although we pretended to try and hit his ball, we always missed it, and he, poor simple ecclesiastic, never once suspected our strategem, and congratulated himself in the most innocent way upon his supposed immunity from harm. However, this did not last long, for George, who, as papa very properly told him afterwards, has no respect whatever for constituted authorities, declared that the bishop spoiled the game, and he should take the earliest opportunity of treating him as if he were only an ordinary human being (just think of that), and consequently, when that opportunity did come, sent the poor bishop's ball flying miles away. The injured prelate turned a look half of pity, half of remonstrance, upon George (entirely lost upon him) which seemed to say, "Young man, I should very much like to administer a grave rebuke to you," and with a slow

but beautiful episcopal stalk, went to look for his ball, which he reached in about five minutes from the time when he started in search of it. No sooner had George set the example than every body, with the exception of myself, seemed to think it fine fun to worry the poor bishop in every possible way, sending his ball often immense distances; but he preserved his dignified demeanour wonderfully well, and amply retaliated upon his foes by the length of time he kept them waiting while he walked deliberately in the direction in which his ball had been sent. I pitied him immensely, especially his dear legs, which must have been so dreadfully hot with that apron over them, and those tight-fitting gaiters.

Of course we took care to show off our "live bishop," as George most irreverently termed him, and made a point of calling upon all the notabilities of the neighbourhood and taking him with us. We had two really splash dinner-parties also during his visit, and it was quite delightful to hear papa say when dinner was announced, "Bishop" (we always called him bishop in his presence, but when we have had occasion to mention him before friends we have sometimes spoken of him as "dear William," to let them know on what intimate terms we were with him), "Bishop, will you take Lady Topsawyer in to dinner?" and then again, so soon as we were settled in our places at table, "Bishop?" whereupon that reverend prelate would say grace in such an aristocratic manner that no one could make out a single word, which deeply impressed every body.

I can assure you that we have been quite looked up to by all the neighbourhood, in consequence of our bishop, and are

considered authorities on many subjects. For instance, does conversation turn upon missionary topics, the company naturally expect the Gushington family, or some member of it, to retail anecdotes of missionary life, received direct from the fountain head, the episcopal lips; and, of course, on all church matters, our opinion is invariably deferred to; but should some ignorant sceptic ever venture to question its accuracy, we should always be able to defend ourselves, by interposing our bishop. Indeed, there is no knowing all the good that we have derived from our acquaintance with that eminent Divine, and for my own part I do not hesitate to say that whenever I think of him I feel myself becoming quite theological. This reminds me to say, that I might have spared myself the trouble of reading Paley's Evidences and Butler's Analogy, for the dear bishop never spoke once during his stay with us upon any thing even remotely connected with the subjects of those works.

Poor fellow, after staying in England as long as he decently could, he returned to Dahomey, and I managed partially to assuage my grief by subscribing, out of the allowance papa makes us for dress and things, a small sum towards providing him with a full suit of episcopal vestments in the latest and most correct taste, so that he might be able, not as George said, to astonish the natives, but to impress upon them the importance of seasonable colours and chaste ceremonial. The whole trousseau (I hope there is no impropriety in using this word to signify the episcopal robes; I should think not, for I have heard, somewhere, that a bishop is said to be married to his see) was most expensively got up, and consisted, so far as I can remember, of sandals of purple

velvet, banded with cloth of gold, jewelled; cassock of purple silk, trained; rochet of fine lawn, edged with Irish point-lace; alb and girdle of fine linen; tunicle of blue silk, banded and fringed with silver; dalmatic of gold-coloured silk, banded and fringed with gold; mitre of cloth of gold, embroidered with passion-flowers; gloves of purple silk, embroidered with gold; ring, a sapphire surrounded with brilliants; and a pastoral staff of ivory and ebony set with topaz, emeralds, and carbuncles. How beautiful he must have looked when full dressed! If, after all this display, the poor blacks refused to be converted, I can only say they did not deserve to have a bishop sent out to them at all.

I must make a few remarks upon the pastoral staff, for I take some credit of the design to myself, as the principle upon which it was formed was entirely new, and partly of my suggestion. The staff was divided into four lengths, for the sake of convenience in packing it up. The several parts screwed into one another, and the novelty of the design consisted in the fact that with the exception of the head of the staff or crook, which was solid, the separate parts were hollow, so that the staff, when fixed together, formed a series of compartments, one above the other, and my suggestion was that these compartments should be utilized, and so fitted up that the dear bishop might carry small but necessary articles in them, when he went a journey through a wild country, where he would find it inconvenient to take much luggage. Acting upon this idea, the manufacturers of the staff, Messrs. Soft, Sawder, and Sons, the well-known man-milliners and clerical decorators, contrived matters so well, that one division held a set of five circular cakes of shaving soap, in the ecclesiastical

colours, to be used respectively according to the seasons, a razor, strop, and shaving-brush; another a tooth-brush, clean neck-cloth, and a box of Pulmonic wafers; and the third, a small bottle exactly fitted to the cavity, containing some of the oldest and finest French cognac that money could procure. I had serious thoughts at one time, of taking out a patent for this style of staff, but when I considered that the demand for such articles was necessarily limited, and more than that, was rendered unnecessarily so by the fact that many degenerate prelates, especially in England, positively performed their functions without any pastoral staff whatever, I did not feel justified in putting papa to the expense such a course would entail, as he would naturally have to furnish me with the money I required.

Although I have given it as my opinion that Colonial bishops stand lower in the social scale than English bishops, yet I must admit that the former have a far finer sense of what is due to the dignity of their office than the latter, for however savage the people may be who inhabit their diocese, the first business of importance they undertake after they are nominated, is, to provide themselves (by subscription) with a full set of episcopal paraphernalia at an ecclesiastical warehouse, whereas the majority of our English bishops rarely trouble their heads about such matters.

Having assisted in a small way to equip our dear bishop for his journey to his diocese, I have naturally taken considerable interest in bishops ever since, and whenever we are in London I make a point of looking out for them, and I may without vanity say that I have by diligence and perseverance acquired a certain degree of knowledge of their customs and habits.

Every one remembers that old story of the Prince Regent and Fox, how they laid a bet as to which should see the greater number of cats in a walk along Pall Mall, and how Fox won because he was obliged to take the sunny side of the street, the Prince having chosen the shady side as the more agreeable. Well, I have often thought that had there been as many Colonial bishops in England then as now, Fox would have won his bet with equal ease, had it concerned bishops instead of cats, for in the course of my episcopal investigations I have observed that bishops appear to be as fond of the sunshine as those well-known domestic pets. Curiously enough, too, they seem to favour the very spot which was the scene of the wager, for I have met I do not know how many strolling along the north side of Pall Mall. Regent Street also they affect in the afternoon. I fancy they like to look at their own portraits in the photograph-shops, which, as my readers probably have observed, abound on the sunny side. I have often seen a bishop looking at a long row of episcopal celebrities, pretending not to notice that his own photograph was among them. I dare say, you know, they like to hear the comments made by bystanders, and to ascertain whether they are recognized by them or not. In Oxford Street one rarely comes across them, it is too bustling a place; although I once did see a bishop there standing staring at a poor cab-horse that had fallen down, and looking as if he longed to go and sit on its head, and very useful he could have made himself had he done so, for he was a big heavy man. As one proceeds Eastward, bishops become rarer and rarer. I have been obliged once or twice to pass through that exhilarating spot, Queen Square, Blooms-

bury, and on two occasions I have met a bishop in Great Ormond Street. I was quite at a loss for some time to account for the phenomenon, until I remembered that there was a home for poor children there, and I have no doubt now but that when the little things are disobedient and fractious, their nurses quiet them by threatening to send for a bishop, and in some extreme cases are actually obliged to put their threat into execution. I can quite fancy that the most unruly children would be awed by a grave rebuke from a bishop, especially when accompanied by a slight application of the pastoral staff.

Exhibitions of pictures I have ascertained to be favourite haunts of bishops. We have seldom been to either of the Water Colours without, to use a sporting phrase, flushing a Home or Colonial; and at the British Institution I am pretty certain that one afternoon we actually put up an archbishop, we were not quite sure, but the dignitary in question undoubtedly resembled in a most remarkable manner the photographs of the distinguished hierarch of a northern province. At the Royal Academy, of course, one may often start a whole covey; and I have sometimes amused myself on fashionable days by sitting on one of the seats in the centre of the middle room, and counting the time that elapsed between the entry of the bishops, and I have found, on comparing my notes, that fifteen minutes would be about the average. I admit that this calculation may be open to objection, on the ground that it is sometimes difficult to distinguish a bishop from a dean, on account of the hat and gaiters. This is true, and therefore I am unwilling to speak positively on the point. However, I generally try to catch

the apron, and in all but a very few instances have succeeded in doing so. Yet in the face of this excess of bishops, people talk of the extension of the episcopate!

I have said that I thought it quite a startling phenomenon to light upon a bishop in Bloomsbury, but I forgot at the time to mention the encounter, yes, the dreadful encounter I had with one in the British Museum. You will naturally ask how it was that I happened to be in so unfashionable a locality. I will tell you. I took it into my head that I should like to have the entrée into the large reading-room by means of a reader's ticket, so papa asked a "respectable house-holder" (our landlord), for they only require a person of that stamp, to certify that I was of age, and a fit and proper person to be admitted into the reading-room, and so forth. I went pretty often for a week or so, when I became tired of the sameness of the thing. Helen, and Katey, or papa, generally walked with me in the morning, and if they did not come for me again in the evening, I used to return home in a cab. With the exception of the smell of leather which pervaded it, I admired the room, and thought the cushioned chairs, the reading and writing-desks, the ink and the new pens (two to each person), perfectly delightful. I soon became acquainted with the ways of the place, for one of the officials, a superior kind of person, quite a gentleman in fact, which I was surprised at, when he saw me puzzling over the catalogue (and no wonder), came up to me and explained the meaning of the press marks before each entry, and the use of the little tickets one has to sign for each book, and how particular one should be in receiving these tickets back again when one had finished with the book, so that before

long I understood the whole arrangement, and very complicated I thought it. This good-natured official told me that there were two rows of desks set apart specially for ladies, to which no gentlemen ever were admitted, but he added that I need not sit at those desks unless I wished to do so. I thought at first I would, but when I saw that the few girls of my own age who were in the building to a man (a woman I mean) preferred seating themselves promiscuously, and that only persons of a certain age occupied the reserved seats, I changed my opinion, and took my place at any desk where there happened to be a vacancy.

I quite enjoyed myself, for I used to order a novel and a lot of other books as well (any books of which the titles sounded learned), for I thought if I appeared to come merely in order to read novels, the people in authority might consider I was abusing my right of entry; and whenever I became tired of reading, I wrote letters (I took in a supply of note-paper and envelopes on purpose), and my friends say I never proved so good a correspondent as during the time I attended at the Museum. However, I am wandering away from my subject in a most random manner. About my encounter with the bishop. I was standing one day inside the circular desk, which contains the catalogue, looking for some book, when just as I had finished writing out my ticket, I heard a melodious voice opposite to me cry, "ahem," and, looking up, I caught the eye of a tall, gentlemanly-looking clergyman, in spectacles, on the other side of the desk, who was evidently desirous of attracting my attention. Of course, I at once blushed up becomingly, and looked at him in an encouraging kind of way, whereupon he held out a blank

ticket, and said, "Oh, I beg your pardon, but could you tell me what I am to do with this, and how I am to fill it up, for I am quite a stranger to the place." I put on as engaging an air as I could, and pretended to be uncertain upon the point myself, although I knew exactly what to tell him, and simpered over it, and said how dreadfully complicated it always seemed to me, and that I never should understand it, never, because I thought a confession of stupidity frankly made would prove attractive. But, to my great disappointment, so soon as he perceived that I was hesitating and simpering about the matter, he shut me up at once, saying quickly, as if he was in a hurry, "Thank you, thank you, much obliged, I see quite now, thank you," and turned away, and presently went up to one of the attendants who stood by, and asked him the very questions he had put to me. The man stared at him for a moment, and then, all of a sudden, became tremendously obsequious, saying, "Oh, yes, my lord, certainly, my lord, sorry to put your lordship to so much trouble, but we are obliged to be particular; yes, my lord, you must sign the ticket if you please, it is a mere form, of course, in your case, my lord, but we find it necessary with the general public." I heard all this as I happened to be looking for another book under a letter close by where they were, and so could not help hearing what was said; and naturally enough, in consequence of what I did hear, I turned to have another look at the gentleman, who, by the way, seemed excessively annoyed at the pertinacity with which the assistant would thrust his services upon him, and immediately knew from his likeness to his photograph that he was that celebrated Colonial bishop, who has

been committing some horrible crime, delivering a plain opinion upon some subject, or thinking for himself, as I have heard, things which all orthodox bishops are so careful to avoid. I felt quite a creeping sensation come over me when I reflected that I had actually spoken to a man, who had incurred universal censure, and whom papa calls heretic, sceptic, and other hard names, among the rest something arian, I know, latitudinarian perhaps. I took a dislike to him, as I said, the moment he rudely put a stop to my remarks upon the difficulty of understanding the catalogue and tickets, by a kind of natural instinct I now feel convinced, and this dislike was increased by what I afterwards noticed, for I took care to keep my eye upon him. To begin with, no one would have known by his dress that he had been a bishop at all, for he actually wore the common chimney-pot hat of every-day life, and so far as I remember, had neither gaiters on his legs, nor a silk apron round his waist, and as soon as he began to be interested in his subject (something heretical of course) he behaved in a most unepiscopal and unorthodox manner, turned his chair half round, exhibiting nothing but his back to me (for when I discovered who he was I changed my original seat for one nearer his), ran his fingers through his hair till it stood up on end like a bearskin cap, and as a finishing stroke of ill-breeding, actually took off his neck-cloth and threw it into his hat. After that I left, indeed I did not think it proper to stay, for I thought he might perhaps proceed to take off his coat next. I returned to our lodgings in a very low, nervous state, feeling contaminated with having breathed the same atmosphere with such a person; indeed at one time I feared my principles

were becoming undermined, but, by a great piece of good luck, we had an order for a private box at the Italian Opera sent us that very evening, and there, under the influence of the delightful music, and the lovely voice of Adelina Patti, I quite recovered my spirits, and when I retired to rest slept a refreshing sleep, and woke next morning in as orthodox a frame of mind as if I had just subscribed the Thirty-nine Articles.

Most of the important facts that I have collected in the course of my episcopal investigations, I have given in this essay, but some I have omitted for want of space. Since, however, I still continue my researches, I hope to gather many more as interesting and as important as those I have already obtained, the whole of which I may be induced perhaps, at some future time, to embody in a modest volume, with the simple and unpretending title of "Our Bishops."

ON THE

FINER FEELINGS OF OUR NATURE

THE popular idea of a sentimental girl, I take to be that of a lackadaisical young person of the Lydia Languish type, with no clearly defined character, considered by some to be deficient in intellect, but perfectly harmless, who is fond of lolling on a sofa, reading second-rate novels, wherein the rich heroine, after suffering the usual amount of ill-treatment at the hands of obdurate parents or guardians, finally marries the hero, an exalted being endowed by nature with every manly grace, and all the cardinal virtues, and wanting in nothing but a certain amount of dross, vulgarly known as the circulating medium; or, as a change from novels, devours poetry, especially the poetry of Byron and Moore, until, at length, she surrounds herself with an atmosphere of unreality, and either pines away under the influence of an absorbing passion for an ideal youth, the creation of her own heated imagination; or else invests some exceedingly prosaic individual with fictitious charms, becomes deeply enamoured of him, persuades him to run away with her (of course against her parents' wishes), discovers after a few weeks of wedded life that she is united to a brute, and either drags along a miserable and hysterical existence for the rest of her life, or

droops and dies early, a victim to misguided affection, and a warning to all girls who loll on sofas, read novels and poetry, and refuse to let their parents choose their husbands for them.

Girls of this stamp existed some thirty or forty years ago, but they exist no longer. The age in which they lived, influenced by the poetry of Byron, Shelley, Keats, and Moore, favoured a kind of namby-pamby sentimentalism, and girls, like novelists, are bound to fall in with the popular taste.

Poets, when not so exceedingly clever that no one is able to understand them, can often direct the popular taste. Novelists, to be successful, must find out wherein that taste lies, and frame their works in accordance with it.

The writings of the poets I have already named influenced their readers, especially their young readers, to an enormous extent; and in those days the heroes and heroines of novelists were deep-souled beings, moody and melancholy, with raven locks, dark eyes, and pensive countenances cast in classic moulds. Riches they seldom had, but when they did possess them it was in the form of ancestral wealth, not the ill-gotten gain derived from any such sordid source as trade.

In the present day, the influence of poets is very small indeed. Men are too practical to listen to poetry. Business, position, and fashion, are the principal motive powers; consequently we find our novel writers furnishing us with works suited to the tastes of the age. They know that the high-born youth, gazing with large melancholy eyes at an empty purse, from which he has just abstracted his last sovereign to supply the necessities of a friend as well-born, but as needy as himself, will have no chance against the

bustling man of business, whose object in life is to make a rapid fortune, and who never gives away a farthing until he can well afford it; notwithstanding that the former possesses, in addition to his melancholy eyes, a marble brow, an expressive mouth, a delicately chiselled nose, a noble mien and a commanding aspect, while the latter squints out of small eyes of no particular colour, wears his red hair cropped short all over his emphatically hard head, and blows his snub nose with a cotton pocket-handkerchief, as, supported upon a pair of bandy legs, he walks with unfailing regularity into his office at nine o'clock every morning. So they choose the latter for a hero instead of the former, and reward him for having attained great mercantile prosperity with the hand of a beauteous damsel, with violet eyes and golden tresses (neither of which were in fashion thirty or forty years ago, if we may judge from the novels of the period), who, of course, despises him, and in the end probably murders him.

For the same reason that novel-writers adapt their works to the style and fashion of the age in which they live, do young ladies of one generation assume manners, habits, and customs differing from those of preceding generations: neither would sell unless they did so. Sentimental girls, that is, girls sentimental in the silly way I have described at the commencement of this letter, would never get off at all in the present day. Hysterics, once so common, are gone quite out of fashion, and why? because practical men look upon hysterical young women either as humbugs or nuisances. A flood of tears, that once infallible weapon in the eyes of a skilful woman, is almost obsolete now, and a girl who were

to confess that she enjoyed a "good cry," would be looked upon as a lunatic; and naturally enough, for where would be the use of making her eyes red about nothing at all? Feminine softness has given place to masculine assurance, and that engaging appearance of helplessness which used to render the sex so charmingly attractive, to an assumption of independence that reminds one almost of the days of bloomerism. And why? Because business men, men of the world, practical men, will not be bothered with women who always require to be looked after and have every thing done for them, and are unable to take their own railway tickets, see their luggage labelled, or comprehend the mysteries of "booking through."

Men's ideas too on the subject of beauty have undergone a complete change, necessitating as a matter of course an entirely new mode of getting oneself made up in a form likely to attract bidders.

Pensive loveliness won't go down, as people say, at all. Piquant pertness will. The delicate, pale-faced, invalidish girl who "lives upon air," has long since been supplanted by the robust and crumby beauty, who confesses to a weakness for underdone beefsteaks. The nervous girl, who screams at the sight of a spider, and jumps upon a chair (to show her ankles) if a mouse should chance to scamper across the room, would do well to find out some other mode of displaying a pair of pretty feet more compatible with personal bravery. Not that I would wish you to understand that girls should never counterfeit fear. On the contrary, nervousness, if well timed, can often be made very effective. For instance, supposing a girl should be walking with some

desirable *parti*, who, to use a slang phrase, won't come up to the scratch, that is, hangs back, and will not make known his intentions; and supposing moreover that they should meet some poor harmless cow, driven perhaps to be milked along a country lane, what should she do in order to derive the greatest advantage from the situation? why, of course, scream, and declare it to be a bull; (for it is always allowable to be frightened at a bull—besides, how should she know it may not really be one? isn't it a great big animal with horns and hoofs?) And if, as will probably be the case, her screams and her assumption of fear should alarm the poor creature, and cause it to stop and stare, she should, without the slightest hesitation, express in accents of terror her firm belief that it is not only a bull but a mad bull. Whereupon the eligible *parti*, anxious to allay her fears, and eager to display his courage (all men like to show off and appear brave at a cheap rate before women), advances with dauntless steps, brandishing his walking-stick, and shouting in a loud voice "hi, hi," to the great dismay of the infuriated animal, who forthwith turns tail and runs away, much to the disgust of the very small boy who has to go after it and drive it back again. So soon as this valorous deed has been accomplished, and the doughty champion has returned, she should, if she has her wits about her, turn pale, put her hand to her heart (left hand, left side, mind), and murmuring in faltering tones "preserver," fall fainting upon his manly bosom. Of course she should take care to recover very soon, because it is so awkward for a man to have to support a woman's deadweight for any length of time, since he cannot very well lay his lovely burden upon a dirty road, or

even if he should be able to place her upon a nice bit of turf, it is a great bore to have to run to some cottage, perhaps a quarter of a mile off, for a glass of water, with the risk of being obliged after all, for want of a better receptacle, to spoil a new hat with ladling some out of a not over-clean ditch. So that a girl under such circumstances ought by all means to "come to" as quickly as she decently can, and even be strong enough, after a little rest, to walk home, leaning upon the arm of the eligible *parti*. Now is the time for her to improve the occasion, by wondering how she could be so foolish as to faint (her heart, she will bid him observe, is palpitating at that very moment), and how he could be so brave as to attack a mad bull, for that it was mad she is morally certain, from the look of its horns. Here she may tenderly insinuate that she could never be frightened again if he were with her, and so forth.

Safely arrived at home she should, after partaking of a glass of sherry, recount the whole adventure, magnifying the proportions and the ferocity of the cow, and extolling to the echo the courage displayed by the eligible young man. Mamma and sisters join in the chorus, until at length the poor fellow swallows the flattery, and begins to think himself really a hero, for

> "Man flattering man not always can prevail,
> But woman flattering man can never fail."

After which, if he is not caught by so well-baited a hook, the angler is not to blame.

Nervousness therefore, under certain circumstances, may be permitted, but, as a rule, in the present day the courageous

girl has the 'pull,' as it is called, over the timid girl. It is sometimes judicious indeed to display an affectation of timidity, in order to flatter some one, upon whom you wish to make an impression, by bringing out his valour and heroism into more prominent relief. For instance, in the mad bull scene described above, it would have been perhaps more effective, if the girl, as soon as the animal had appeared, had grasped her companion's arm in an agony of terror, and exclaimed, "Oh, dear Mr. Hercules, you will protect me, will you not?" an appeal which could not have failed to make an impression on the most flinty of hearts, especially when accompanied by the affectionate word 'dear' as applied to the desired object, which he might be allowed to suppose had slipped out by accident in the excitement of the moment. As a matter of fact, the girl would of course purposely employ the term, well knowing that even if he were to suspect the truth, the circumstances of the case would always be available to cloak any apparent breach of propriety.

But to resume the thread of my discourse. The change in the taste of the age as to the kind of beauty most attractive to the senses, is not merely confined to one part of creation, but extends pretty generally over the whole. Babbling brooks and streams that peacefully purl or gracefully meander through verdant meadows, have been overwhelmed by the impetuous torrents that rushing rivers roll over rugged rocks. Wild mountainous scenery, broad plains and wide expanses of open country, have quite cast into the shade less pretentious home views, the sequestered vales, the secluded spots, the nooks and corners of old England, in which painters used formerly to delight, as some behind the age

do still. Thatched cottages covered with roses and honeysuckle, romantically reposing beneath umbrageous elms, and picturesque homesteads, also thatched, and tumbling to pieces for want of repair, are rapidly disappearing from the face of the land.

The cottages are replaced either by plain staring red boxes with four windows and a door, and a parsimonious roof of blue slate; or, where the builder aims at a little effect, by odd-shaped gothic structures of variegated bricks, looking like coloured sections of geological strata, and more fitted for Malvern or Tunbridge Wells than an English parish in an agricultural district; the umbrageous elms are cut down and sold at so much per foot to "open the view;" the tumble-down homesteads come to a violent end, and in their stead rise up farm-buildings with all the latest improvements, including a horrible matter-of-fact steam-engine, that threshes, and winnows, and crushes, and pulps, and does ever so many other things that no one used to hear of formerly. Even the "bold peasantry, their country's pride," are altered beings. Papa says he can recollect when they were a happy and contented race, satisfied with their wages and respectful to their betters; but now they seem to fancy that they have no betters, notwithstanding the catechism; and even I, within the last two or three years, can see a considerable change in the behaviour of poor people. The men don't touch their hats to one with a pleasant "good morning, miss," nor the women curtsey when they meet one, with nearly so much regularity as formerly; nor are they half so thankful for old clothes and things, not to mention that they are always wanting higher wages I am sure I can remember the

time when the working men and boys used to be most grateful for a pair of papa's old boots, or trousers, or an old coat of George's, whereas now, they would scarcely say 'thank you' for them. I will just give you an instance in point, to show you how little the lower orders care for the trouble their superiors take on their behalf. Of course you know, from our position in the parish, we are expected to be charitable, especially as papa farms the glebe, so we give away a good many things, skim-milk and so forth, and all the year round, but particularly in the winter, we make what we call poor people's soup. It is done with odds and ends, bones, crusts of bread, and cold vegetables, and is really very palatable stuff—not what one would put on one's own table, of course, but good enough for poor people who have no chance of making any for themselves, and we always tell our cook to be particular and not let the bones and scraps become stale, and as she is a very careful person, they rarely do, except in hot weather, when she puts a little more pepper and salt into the soup, which makes it all right. Well, you know, the people come for this as often as they like, and one woman, a widow, (Mary Smith is her name, for I think it is right she should be publicly exposed,) used to bring a quart jug regularly every other day, and we were quite pleased to find she appreciated our kindness, especially as she had a large family of small children, and we often used to ask her how they liked it, and she always replied, "Oh, uncommon, miss, it do do 'em a world o' good, it do, and the Lord Almighty bless you miss, and all the family, for being so kind as to let us poor folks have a drop now and again,', and then she would curtsey so respectfully. Well, one day

we heard, quite casually, from a neighbour who was jealous she should have so much, that this very Mary Smith had often told her, that the parson's soup brought her little pig on nicely. She had thrown it all into the wash-tub! only think of that, now! Papa was dreadfully annoyed when he heard of it, and next Sunday preached a beautiful sermon about Dives and Lazarus, to show that the poor in those days were contented with mere crumbs, without ever asking for soup.

For my own part, I must say, although I know how wicked it is to go contrary to the tastes of the age, that I cannot but deplore the hard-hearted materialism of the present day. I am no sentimentalist in the popular acceptation of the term. Indeed, as I have already said, sentimental girls, as a class, are extinct, and single specimens are on a par, as regards rarity, with the apteryx and the great auk. That the old type still retains its hold on the popular mind, is no proof of the continued vitality of the original, but rather testifies to the truth of the fact, that sentimentality does not even exist in a modified form; for if it did, our impressions would assuredly be derived from that, and not as now, from a form, or as I have styled it, the original, which we know to have existed in a past generation, but which common sense, experience, and analogy all tell us could never be made to accord with the taste of the day, without undergoing considerable modifications. We may then take it for granted that no girls in society ever loll upon sofas, reading novels and poetry, exciting their imagination, disobeying their parents, and eloping with poor men. With the exception of the last, which, of course, no girl with any self-respect

ever could bring herself to perform, all these actions are, I admit, done separately every day by many girls; but, as they neither necessarily coexist, nor spring successively from one another, they are no longer the outward marks of a sentimental disposition (supposing it were possible for a girl to evince such a disposition in these times).

I, myself, am excessively fond of reading novels, not so much for the sake of making myself acquainted with the writings of a clever author, as that I may say I have read them when any one asks me at a dinner-party, for instance, whether I have done so. Indeed, all girls who go out much into society, should be up in the latest novels, as it is the regular thing for a gentleman, when his supply of small-talk begins to fail, to ask one whether one has read such and such a new book, of which he knows probably only the title, on purpose that he may have time to think of some fresh topics while one is speaking.

We have a box from Mudie's about once every three months, and should have it oftener were it not for papa, who will persist in sending for some horrid theological works, over which he says he cannot be hurried; and really he does put one quite out of patience, spelling the books over and beginning again every night a page behind the place at which he last left off, so as to be certain not to miss any thing, whereas we girls have generally finished all the books worth reading in a month or six weeks at the latest. I never become so deeply interested in a novel as to be unable to tear myself away from it, for I have read so many that I can generally guess pretty well how any one will end; but if I should happen to be puzzled, I turn to the last volume and

look at the *dénouement*, and if I perceive that it is likely to terminate in a melancholy manner, I either stop reading it or skip over the disagreeable parts; for my feelings are so naturally sensitive that very little harrows them, and if I were once to yield and allow myself to be carried away by them, I should be fit for nothing for days, and dreadfully low-spirited, perhaps at a time when it might be most important for me to make the most of myself by putting on an appearance of animation,—for, as I mentioned in "CROQUET," I generally look my best when I am animated.

This natural sensitiveness, which I cannot overcome, although I am aware how much it is against my future prospects in life, is that which causes me to deplore the materialism of the day. Nature made me a soft impressionable creature, and why, I ask, is art to destroy all those finer feelings, the possession of which, in former days when the world was young and innocent, our sex was not ashamed to avow? I will go still further. I will confess that I long to be relieved from the artificial trammels which our present social system casts around us. I pant after the simplicity of the golden age. How happy should I be were it but possible to revive Arcadia! What a delightful age that must have been when the world was peopled with none but shepherds and shepherdesses, when instead of settlements and all the horrid money-matters which stand so much in one's way, a girl was perfectly satisfied if her swain possessed a few sheep, or a cow or two, and could play some simple tunes on an oaten reed; when Damon and Corydon sat all day long under wide-spreading beech-trees, piping to Phyllis, and Chloris, and Chloe, as they danced to the melodious strains

on green pastures, or laid their weary limbs to rest on mossy banks, the while they listened to a friendly contest of skill, also on the pipes, between two neighbouring shepherd-lads, so equally matched that an impartial judge invariably awarded a prize to each, some simple thing, a kid perhaps to one, and a curiously carved wooden cup to the other. Love was not then an "empty sound,"

> "On earth unseen, or only found
> To warm the turtle's nest,"

but lads and lasses, with engaging artlessness, shot inquiring glances out of sympathetic eyes, confessed mutual flames, and plighted their troth without any of the unnecessary circumlocution which in these days attends a declaration of affection. I know that I am trenching on dangerous ground, and that in society it is not considered the thing for young people to fall in love of their own accord, until the desirability of the match has been decided by their parents; and if I had not been carried away by the entrancing nature of the subject, I cannot conceive how I, as a well-bred girl, could ever have brought myself to write in such a wild way. I feel as if I had committed some great crime already, and until I have confessed to dear Mr. Alban I am certain I shall suffer all the pangs of a guilty conscience. As however he will come to shrive me punctually at 11 A.M. to-morrow morning, I may as well take the opportunity of sinning a little more, and give you my ideas with regard to the possibility of restoring a portion of that simplicity in manners which prevailed in primitive times. I am not so sanguine as to suppose that

the pastoral age, the age of shepherds, and shepherdesses, flocks and herds, and Pandean pipes, could ever be revived in any thing like its original form in these days of business and railways, but still I think we might effect much by simply becoming more rustic, more sylvan; what harm, for instance, could possibly ensue, were I to take the initiative, and dress à la shepherdess, in a blue satin body open in front, with short sleeves, the skirt looped up all round, or pinned back behind over a red petticoat beautifully embroidered, with blue satin shoes, ornamented with bows of ribbon, on my feet, and a small straw hat, trimmed with flowers, coquettishly stuck on one side of my head; a crook in one hand, and a posy (to use a rustic word) in the other? None whatever, for the costume would certainly become me, and can any thing be said more in its favour than that?

I do not however propose to take even so moderate a step as this. All I ask for is permission to become more countryfied. I should like to be a milkmaid in a green gown, and dance round a maypole, or at all events to have a nice little cosy cottage of my own, with a nice little farm where I could keep sheep, and cows, Alderneys of course, and have a dairy, and make butter. I would have every thing so beautifully neat and clean, all glass milk-pans, which I should let nobody touch but myself, for fear they should get broken. I am even now not so inexperienced in such matters as you might suppose, for we keep cows in the glebe, and last summer I determined I would make some butter all myself; so I went into the dairy, got some cream, tucked up my sleeves and pinned my skirts back, and began to churn in one of those upright earthenware churns where you work

a sort of broom-handle up and down. Well, I got on beautifully at first, but after I had been churning an hour, my arms ached to that degree I could hardly lift them up; however, I would persevere, because I knew our dairymaid, who very much disliked my interfering in her department, would exult so over me if I gave it up; but notwithstanding that I continued to beat the cream with regular strokes, as I had been told to do, the butter would not come. So then one of the servants said the cream was too hot, so we poured a quantity of cold water into the churn, but without producing the desired effect; upon which some one else suggested that it might be too cold, whereupon we poured a lot of hot water in, and I continued churning and churning until I was fit to drop, and at last had to give it up. Then we set the groom to churn, and he gave it up; and then the boy who helps in the garden, and he gave it up; and then the fame of my exploit having reached papa's ears, he came, and he gave it up; and then we left it for every body to churn who liked, and nobody liked, and I became quite low-spirited about it. At last, just before we were going to bed (I had commenced operations before breakfast), I said I would go and have another turn at it, and so I did, and wonderful to relate the butter came, and I made it up by candlelight, and next morning it was brought in for breakfast, and any butter so bad I never tasted. It was impossible to eat it, so we gave it away to the poor people, and I got quite a name all over the parish, insomuch that whenever a farmer's wife made any bad butter she called it Miss Angelina's butter. Very flattering, was it not?

Of course I should know better now, and I believe I could

manage quite a large dairy. Then as regards sheep, I think I could with a little assistance rear them; for when we were all children, papa used to give us every year, when the lambs came, the first three lots of twins, that was two lambs apiece. They continued to be called ours till they grew into sheep, when we generally forgot all about them; and I should not wonder if the poor dear innocent things were killed, and we ate them as mutton. However, it has often struck me since, how foolish we were not to keep them, because of course, on the very moderate assumption that each would have only one lamb, the next year we should have had four apiece, and the next eight, and the next sixteen, and so on, like the nails in the horse's shoes in the Arithmetic book, so that in a very few years' time we should have had an enormous flock of sheep, which we could have sold and made a great deal of money by. I wonder farmers don't think of this, and instead of complaining and grumbling, as they always do, make their fortunes at once.

In happier times, when George and I were on more friendly terms than we are now (he has not been near us for weeks, and I detest him so you can't think), I once threw out a feeler about love in a cottage, or small farm-house, and told him my ideas upon farming, and keeping cows, and sweet little lambs; but he destroyed all the romance of the thing, by saying that, as I proposed to make so much butter, he thought it would be more profitable to keep pigs than sheep, as the buttermilk would come in so useful for them. I never expected he would have taken such a commonplace view of the subject. It quite shocked me at the time to find he had so little appreciation of the beautiful.

Alas, how unsympathetic the world is, and how impossible is it for a girl, who has often been told by competent judges that she is "all soul," to satisfy, amid the artificial surroundings of society, the cravings of a simple, a refined, an ethereal nature!

ON

A NEW MODE OF DOING PENANCE

A GRAND idea frequently enters one's head without giving one the slightest intimation of its approach. An instance of this has just occurred in my own person. For some time Mr. Alban and I have been racking our brains to discover a new kind of penance. We have become dissatisfied, and not unnaturally so, with the commonplace old-fashioned systems of mortifying the flesh, that have been in vogue from time immemorial in civilized society. Fasting makes one pale, takes away one's good looks, and, if carried to excess, reduces a finely-proportioned figure to the lank dimensions of a skeleton. Evidently this must be discarded. Praying a certain number of prayers every day afflicts the spirit more than the body, and it is the body in connexion with the spirit that we wish to subdue by undergoing ourselves, or imposing upon others, something vexatious. We thought of many plans, but none seemed exactly suitable. I will enumerate a few of them. Poor dear papa spoke quite sharply to me one day, because he saw me reading "The Church and the World," a beautiful book Mr. Alban had lent me; so I at once perceived how much good a little penance would do him, and proceeded to take all the buttons

off the wristbands of his shirts, which device was so far successful, that it put him into a terrible passion for a clergyman (you can't think how shocked I was), but was attended with this disadvantage, viz., that although he did not know who had taken the buttons off, he made me sew them all on again; so that I was obliged to exercise a little more forethought the next time I invented a penance, and I think it will be admitted that I devised for the particular case a most ingenious form of torture.

Our parlour-maid, Mary, who has been with us for some years, annoyed me excessively by making a great profession of what she termed religious principles, which, after all, as I very soon ascertained, amounted to neither more nor less than rank Dissent: so as mamma seemed disinclined to part with her—for she certainly was useful as a servant, if heretical—I said to her one day, "Oh, Mary, here are a pair of boots you may have,—they are very good and quite new, but they are not exactly the kind I ordered. I think they will do for you nicely." She thanked me very much and took them. Now I must tell you that these boots were dreadfully tight, and pinched me horribly, so I knew if she wore them she would endure terrible agony, and soon have a plentiful supply of corns, supposing she had none already. I expect she found this out, for I noticed she never had them on; so I said I was sorry she did not appreciate my kindness, that the boots were by a first-rate maker, and I should wish her to wear them every day, as boots and shoes were certain to be spoiled if they were laid by. So, of course, after these remarks, she felt obliged to wear them, and as a consequence, with the boots endured the penance. I could

tell by the expression of her face when she came into the room that she was suffering hourly martyrdom, and it made me quite cheerful to think how well my plan was working. In a short time she began to limp perceptibly, and as her lameness lasted after the boots were worn out, I have strong hopes that it may become confirmed. This was a grand step, and I was prepared for the congratulations Mr. Alban offered me upon the success of my scheme. He said what a capital thing it would be if one could force all Dissenters to wear tight boots; and at one time I fancy he was a little sanguine upon the point, and thought he saw his way to the complete subversal of heresy throughout the country by suborning the shoemakers, although, as he merrily remarked, it would be scarcely possible to make such people walk more crookedly than they do now.

We have not introduced any fresh modes of penance among the school-children, it is true, but still we have effected a few improvements upon the ordinary punishments of minor offenders. The dunce's cap, which was originally made of white paper, I have illuminated with red and yellow flames, in imitation of the caps which the officers of the holy Inquisition were accustomed to place upon the heads of heretics at an *auto-da-fé*, and we tell the children, whenever we have occasion to use it, that by rights they ought to be burnt alive, whereby the most refractory are soon reduced to submission. We think it well, too, to instil correct principles into the mind at as early an age as possible: so in the infant school, instead of putting a child in the corner when naughty, we put it in purgatory, as we style a kind of coal cupboard under the staircase, as dark as pitch; and as we take care to represent

"purgatory" as a most horrible place, full of hideous hobgoblins and demons, we frighten the little things dreadfully, and several of them begin already to show signs of incipient idiocy.

Thus far you will have observed I have been relating cases of penance imposed upon other people, but you must not therefore suppose that we underwent no mortifications ourselves. To begin with, there were the early morning services at 7 A.M. in the winter. Think of that. I feel convinced I shall be rewarded in some way for the subjugation of the flesh I endured in attending them. And I am sure one deserves something for getting out of bed on a frosty morning by candlelight (a thing I detest), washing in cold water, as there was no hot to be had at that time of day, huddling on one's clothes, and then saying one's prayers in a voice trembling with a mixture of spiritual fervour and corporeal cold in a damp church, instead of praying in one's closet with the door shut. Dear Mr. Alban was very considerate, I must say, for at his own expense he laid down a quantity of cocoa-nut matting for us to stand upon; but still with all my zeal I used to shiver through the whole of the service. However, after all, I do not know whether one should look upon early morning services in the light of a penance, for there is a kind of complacent satisfaction in feeling that one is undergoing a self-imposed task against one's inclination, that has its charms, at all events for the feminine mind, not to mention that this work—I won't say of supererogation—of piety makes one feel so good for the rest of the day. Indeed, I was quite out of temper one morning when I had to get up early and make

breakfast for papa, who was going off by the mail train to London, and was thereby hindered from attending morning service. I did not recover my spirits for nearly a week. This mention of papa reminds me to say that he was most unreasonably opposed to my rising early for service, used to laugh at my "sudden freaks," and asked me whether I did not think old Betty the washerwoman, who was up by three in the morning in summer and five in winter, and Dick Chawbacon, who also rose at some unconscionable hour all the year round, and who never took the least merit to themselves on that account, but simply performed the duties of the state of life to which they had been called, to the best of their ability, were not as likely to go to heaven as I, who considered I was performing a wonderful act of self-denial by turning out of bed an hour before my usual time, and that too with the expectation of receiving some future reward. I answered with as much composure as I could assume, for I felt very angry, that I was not so well acquainted as he seemed to be with washerwomen and ploughboys, that I thought he had better inquire whether they said any prayers at all before he accused me in that dreadful way, only because I wanted to try and be a little extra good ; and, I added as I left the room, that there was far too much self-righteousness in the world to please me. He never alluded to the subject again.

It is not necessary for me here to enter into any lengthy discussion upon the question whether morning services at 7 A.M. in the winter are to be looked upon in the light of a penance or not. I have made mention of them for this reason, that they were the nearest approach to corporeal

subjugation I underwent myself; for although I was able to impose penances upon other people, I had a difficulty in hitting upon a mode of humiliation that suited my own case. And it will have been observed that there was nothing particularly new in the devices I have enumerated. Shirt buttons have been recognized household plagues from the time, I should suppose, when shirts were first worn; and tight shoes are nothing but a kind of modernized variation of the iron boots and thumbscrews of the middle ages; while the penitential improvements we set on foot in the national school, amounted to nothing more than the associating of correct ideas with the infliction of old-established penalties upon unruly children. We taxed our invention in vain to discover new penances, until quite suddenly, as I have said, a grand idea entered my head. This was, that one might undergo a most effectual mortification of the flesh by having one's photograph taken, and thus not only introduce a taking ecclesiastical novelty, but also provide needy clergymen with a means of increasing their income, not inconsistent with the serious nature of their profession; for although under the present system no clergyman could turn photographer to gain a livelihood without incurring social degradation, there could be no more impropriety, were my suggestion carried into effect, in a clergyman taking a fee for imposing a photographic penance, than for burying or marrying a person.

That going to a photographer's to be 'done' is a real penance, I think all people who have experienced the painful ordeal will readily admit. There is in the first place the very thought of the thing. The certainty that one will never

'come out' well, that one will look one's worst just at the very time when one would desire to look one's best. Then there is the worry and anxiety of mind upon the knotty point of dress. One must not wear blue, for instance, nor any thing with a very *prononcé* pattern. The attitude one shall assume will be the next vexed question; *negligé*, of course; but then people's ideas differ as to what is *negligé*. For my own part, I incline to a table, an arm-chair, a bouquet, and one's head a little on one side for an interior; and a vase, a Swiss landscape (waterfall in the foreground, and Mont Blanc in the distance), a standing posture slightly pensive, and fingers carelessly placed between the leaves of a book, for the open air. But these are merely personal predilections, and tastes naturally vary with individuals. Preliminaries arranged as satisfactorily as they possibly can be in the perturbed state of one's mind, we will suppose the fatal day arrived. One is ushered up endless flights of stairs into a waiting-room, where one has to do one's hair, and see that one's nose isn't red, in the presence of a number of other victims, some of whom are awaiting their summons with that sort of forced composure which only brings their nervousness out into greater relief; a few, perhaps, express their trepidation in audible tones, and are comforted in equally audible tones by more experienced friends, who, on the strength of having been done ever so many times, assume a conscious superiority over their weaker companions, and assure them that "it's nothing, really nothing, after all, and over in a minute too," as if they were speaking of having a tooth drawn; the remainder *have* been done. On the countenances of one or two, there is a joyful expression, they have "come out better than they

expected"—these are the fortunate individuals: but on the countenances of the rest, there is an expression of settled melancholy; they have seen their "negatives"—they knew how it would be from the first—"Oh yes, my dear, a perfect fright!" these are the many unfortunate individuals. At length, after one has tired oneself to death with looking at albums full of portraits of people whom no one knows any thing of, a young man stained with chemicals steps hurriedly into the room, "Miss Gushington." More flights of stairs, up one goes, trips I should say, and is shown into a room apparently all glass, with a general glare of light, so strong that it makes one's eyes water. Very polite man,—take a seat here, if you please; one composes oneself in what one fancies will be a telling attitude. Won't do at all, much better thus; and one is pulled about, and made to sit in a stiff, uncomfortable posture, which the polite gentleman insists, with a slight foreign accent, is exceedingly natural. Polite gentleman focusses one—do very nicely—alters the light by shifting a number of shutters on the roof of the glass house. Oh, yes, beautiful portrait to a certainty—will one sit still just for a moment, while one's head is stuck between a pair of iron prongs? one sits still, because one can't help it, painfully conscious that one must look very like a wooden doll, and with an almost irresistible inclination to rub the tip of one's nose. "Now, steady, if you please, fix your eyes on this bit of paper" (pins a bit of white paper on a screen): one begins to squint directly. "Now again, steady, you may wink your eyes if you wish to do so" (this is said as if he were conferring an inestimable boon): of course one has an immediate desire to wink furiously. The cover of the machine

cautiously removed, one, two, three .... ten, that will do; photographer retires into dark closet, carrying portrait wrapped up under his arm, perfectly confident that it will be an excellent one. Quickly returns, yes, very fair; one more in another posture, process repeated. Would one like to see the negative? certainly; negative produced, impression vague; one thinks it not unlikely that one will turn out to be a negress, with white hair and a black face. Couldn't be a better photograph—oh, indeed. There! if that isn't penance, what is, I should like to know?

Although this grand idea of mine was perfectly original, I am compelled to admit, when I reflect upon the subject, that it may have occurred to other people before it did to me. Indeed, from observations I have made since I conceived it, I am nearly certain that a few persons have already actually applied photography to the purposes of self-mortification in the very way I myself have suggested. You remember poor brother Ignatius? Yes, of course you do. Well, before that poor gentleman re-assumed the commonplace garb of every-day clerical life, and while yet he was clothed in all the simplicity of camel's-hair and sandals, I used to wonder how he could find time, so fully occupied as he must have been in keeping those shockingly disobedient monks in order at Norwich, to have his photograph taken so frequently. One saw portraits of brother Ignatius in every variety of attitude, I may say in all conceivable postures (ecclesiastical and mediæval of course); sometimes alone, pensive and melancholy, in a cell; at others attended by companions, brothers of his order, or sweet little acolytes in nice little clean pinafores, surplices I mean, posed in correct

postures in some gorgeous edifice, but always looking sweetly, with his tonsured head brought forward into conspicuous relief, the one bright spot shining in the midst of funereal darkness. Now I have not the slightest doubt in my own mind, that each one of these portraits testifies to the performance of a separate act of penance, and that the brain of the dear monk must have been ever on the rack to invent new and picturesque attitudes. What an interesting and instructive study it would be to form a complete collection of Ignatian photographs, and by their means trace the gradual development of the beautiful, the sentimental, the sweet, and the telling in the monastic mind!

But the merit of having applied the art of the photographer to the soothing of the soul must not rest with brother Ignatius alone. I have lately seen a carte-de-visite of a right reverend prelate, which I am morally convinced could never have been taken but as an extreme mode of affording penitential relief to a burthened spirit. The dear bishop, decked in his robes, with the riband and badge of the order of the Garter round his neck, stands in the attitude of blessing a congregation. His left hand grasps a lovely pastoral staff taller than himself, and his right is raised aloft, the middle and index fingers pointing upwards, the third and little fingers bent downwards to meet the thumb, which is turned inwards on the palm of the hand, a digital contortion of the most correct kind, but more difficult to execute than to describe. A pyschological inquiry into the causes which led to the adoption of this imposing attitude, with a sketch of the mode in which the whole proceeding was conducted, would form a valuable contribution to ecclesiastical literature. I fear how-

ever that the bishop, with the modesty which characterizes all his actions, would shrink from laying bare the inmost feelings of his heart, even if it were to benefit his clerical brethren. Therefore, although I know what presumption it is on my part to make an attempt to evolve out of my inner consciousness, as it were, the causes and the mode, yet I am content to bear the blame such a course of procedure may entail upon me, for the sake of the good which cannot but accrue to society from a mental investigation of the kind, however insufficiently it may be performed, owing to paucity of data and lack of intellectual qualifications on the part of my own humble self.

We will suppose that the bishop felt the necessity of undergoing some severe penance (for bishops, alas, are mortal!) and had determined that it should take a photographic form. So far, so good; the question would then arise, "how shall I be done?" One can imagine the episcopal mind harassed from day to day, cogitating and revolving, and yet unable to arrive at a 'correct' solution. Restless nights and weary days would succeed one another in a dreary sequence, until at length some one (a young lady perhaps, who knows?) might say to the disquieted ecclesiastic in a cheerful voice, "Oh, you dear bishop, I should so like to have your photograph, do be taken especially for me;" whereupon the bishop would wince, for this would be touching him on a sore point; but, recovering his composure, would gravely, as became a bishop, accede to her request, albeit with a mournful air, and then, as if glad of a suggestion from any one, even a young lady, catching at a straw in fact, he would add, "How would you wish to have me taken then?" whereupon, if she were a girl of spirit, as we

may presume she would be, she would reply with vivacity and tact, "Oh, full dress, of course, and mind you have your walking stick with the crook to it, and that gold ornament round your neck." The bishop, shocked at her untimely levity, would gravely rebuke her, but lest he might inflict too severe a wound in her susceptible bosom, he would also yield to her on these points, not a little glad, too, to have thus easily settled the momentous question. Do not suppose, however, that his labours and troubles would end here. We must next picture him posturing in his robes before a cheval glass, admiring his get-up, and posing himself in various attitudes, uncertain as yet which would be the most penitentially effective. Suddenly, as by inspiration, he would call for his pastoral staff, and assume the position of a bishop blessing his flock. The majesty and easy grace of the posture would be so self-evident that he would at once determine to adopt it, and taking off his somewhat cumbrous robes, seek the retirement of his study to practise that peculiar disposition of the fingers and thumb of the right hand which I have already described. This in itself would be a work requiring the exercise of some patience and perseverance. We all know how mutually dependent one's fingers are, and how difficult it is to bend one without bending all. Here then would be a fertile source for an evening's employment. The bishop locked in his study, and supposed by the members of his household to be engaged in penning some learned charge to the clergy of his diocese, would be occupied in the more athletic, and I may even add, more intellectual pursuit of reducing into submission his refractory digits. I know myself how much time he would have to devote to the task, for

ever since I saw his photograph I have been practising with my own fingers, and I can do it beautifully now, and so can Mr. Alban, who learnt from me. It may be useful to him, for as he is well connected (first cousin to a baronet, I believe), it is possible he may be made a bishop some day; but with me it is nothing more than an accomplishment (of which I am a little proud, nevertheless), for I do not expect to see the rights of women fully acknowledged in my time. But to return to the bishop. That excellent prelate might now be considered prepared to undergo the frightful ordeal of being photographed, and he would have to consider whether he would go ready dressed, like a cold chicken at a picnic, to the photographer's studio, or have his things sent there for him, and put them on in a private room. If he adopted the first plan, he would, of course, ride in a close carriage, carrying the pastoral staff with him, the crook stuck out of window, as there would be no room for it inside, unless the staff took to pieces, like the one we gave to our dear friend the bishop of Dahomey. I may here mention, that as a prudent and thoughtful prelate, he would of course have taken care to have had the silver mountings of his staff brightened up with plate-powder for the occasion, and the wooden portions extra French-polished. These minor arrangements completed, behold the bishop ushered into the presence of the 'artist,' by whom he is treated with the respect and deference due to his rank. Would his exalted visitor take a seat while he, the skilful photographer, prepares a plate? The bishop rests, for oppressed with the weight of his vestments, and slightly overcome with the exertion of mounting so many pairs of stairs, he is aweary. The artist returns. Any particular attitude?

The attitude of blessing—certainly; quite the thing, will look very imposing, and become his lordship admirably. Adjustment of focus. Here a hitch occurs, the bishop's naturally bland visage refuses to assume the degree of gravity, not to say sternness, requisite on this impressive occasion. Would his lordship put on a look of greater solemnity, not to say severity? Dear me, that will never do; too bland by half. What is to be done? Happy thought on the part of photographer. If his lordship would excuse the liberty,—he, the photographer, in a moment of weakness, for which he now craves pardon, took the portrait of a wealthy but bigoted Dissenter. Would his lordship deign to look at it? perhaps he might by gazing thereon be enabled to assume the desired severity of countenance. The good bishop controls his feelings, and by an effort of will fastens his eyes upon the heretical features. Instant and wonderful transformation of the episcopal lineaments, as much too severe now as they were previously too benign. We are to bless and not to excommunicate, an expression of grave solemnity and not of anger is what we (the bishop) should endeavour to assume—the happy medium is the thing—how can that be attained? Bright thought again occurs to sharp-witted photographer. He has a photograph of brother Ignatius—the bishop smiles. We shall yet succeed. Would his lordship condescend to look at the monk with one eye and squint at the Dissenter with the other? Bishop will try. Admirable—the happy medium at last. Now head-rest adjusted—that will do; could his lordship fancy himself on the steps of the altar? His lordship will endeavour to do so, but the lightness of the room takes away from the illusion, not to mention

a landscape of chimney-pots seen through the glass. Thank you, that will do nicely. Staff held loosely in left hand, crook pointing outwards, to denote external authority. Very good—photographer will pay particular attention to the staff. Now, hand uplifted, fingers contorted, eyes fixed on the two photographs, the bane and the antidote—beautiful expression of countenance—piety, fervour, gravity, vast intellectual qualifications admirably commingled. Now, steady—one, two, three . . . ten. That will do. Not necessary to detain his lordship any longer. Yes, his lordship may depend upon it, the staff will come out to perfection. And the badge? and the badge. Mind the step, my lord. John, see his lordship out.

I have thus feebly endeavoured to pourtray some of the varied scenes of the little pantomime in which the dear bishop would have to sustain the chief rôle, as in my imagination they might have been acted. And how touching is the reflection, that so distinguished a member of the spiritual bench might have gone through some such irksome performance as this purely as a penance! And yet that it must have been so is self-evident, for how is it possible to imagine any member of the clerical profession, let alone a bishop, deliberately dressing himself up in his gayest attire, hanging a bauble attached to a bit of blue riband round his neck (by way, it may be presumed, of pointing out the connexion between Church and State), furnishing himself with a huge gilded and jewelled crook, and thus decked out in all his finery, acting at performing one of the holiest functions of his office in a photographer's garret, except it were for the express purpose of thereby undergoing a most humiliating form of penance?

Not that I would have you suppose that *I* should see any impossibility in the matter at all. I indeed think that the dear bishop was photographed as a penance, but I am not, I am happy to say, one of those narrow-minded individuals who would object to the application of photography to legitimate ecclesiastical purposes. Persons of weak or limited intellect might indeed shudder at the notion of having their photographs taken while they were praying in a church or blessing a congregation; but we who go in for histrionic devotion, have much more enlarged, and consequently more enlightened views on such matters, and look with feelings akin to derision upon our more squeamish co-religionists, men so tied down by the bonds of conventionality, that they dare not march with the times, or avail themselves of discoveries made by scientific investigators. What a pity it is that the force of habit and the mere accustomed association of certain ideas should so prejudice men, as to render them positively blind to their best interests!

What a vast field of inquiry is here opened to us! Would that it came within the scope of our present discussion! However, I am compelled not to enter upon it, as my remarks must be strictly confined to the subject placed at the head of this essay. I think I have clearly shown that by means of photography it is possible to concert a most valuable and novel form of penance: one too which, although not publicly avowed by them, has already received the private sanction by personal practice of two well-known and highly respected members of society; the one the self-styled brother Ignatius, the other a distinguished ornament of the bench of bishops.

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